Hafa Adai!

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Federal inmate's request for early release is denied. PAGE 2

PH suspends entry of foreigners, returning Filipinos who are not OFWs. PAGE 2

Longer quarantine for violators

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

While quarantine protocols for COVID-19 are being modified for returning residents, this does not mean that the health protocols are being loosened, according to Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña. In fact, added measures are in place to ensure that the rules are still being strictly followed, she said.

See LONGER on Page 4

GAS PRICES INCREASE AGAIN

Just two weeks since increasing its prices by 10 cents, Mobil Oil Marianas increased its prices again yesterday by an additional 12 cents, bringing its primary fuel product to $4.52 per gallon. Shell Marianas, for the time being, remains at its current price but is expected to follow suit. Both companies typically mirror each other's price adjustments. Mobil raised its price yesterday for a gallon of Extra fuel from $4.40 per gallon to $4.52. The price of Supreme fuel escalated from $4.85 per gallon to $4.97 per gallon, with Mobil's Diesel currently at $4.58 a gallon.

NEIL FAMA

Sablan to CUC: What needs federal funding?

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) has asked the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. to provide his office information about its needs, saying the likelihood of U.S. Congress funding key infrastructure in the Marianas continue to grow.

Sablan asked CUC executive director Gary P. Camacho last week for information on CUC projects and costs in developing potable water, protecting water supplies and coastal waters, and reducing power costs—all in preparation should Con-

See SABLAN on Page 4

'FBI was executing search warrant'

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Federal Bureau of Investigation in Honolulu affirmed over the weekend that its agents executed a search warrant on Saipan last Tuesday at the accounting and tax service company RR & Associates Corp. for the CNMI.

In her reply to *Saipan Tribune*'s inquiry, FBI spokesperson Michele Ernst confirmed that the FBI executed the search warrant on Saipan last March 16, but declined to comment further as per standard procedure. The FBI and most law enforcement agencies typically decline to reveal

See FBI on Page 4

Bill asserts legislative power over NMI's share in Biden relief law

» Some Republican lawmakers question rushing on the bill without much review

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

House Committee on Ways and Means chair Rep. Donald M. Manglona (Ind-Rota) has introduced a bill to require legislative oversight over approximately $515 million that will be allocated to the CNMI for government operations under the American Rescue Plan.

In House Bill 22-33 that's co-sponsored by six other Democrats, Manglona states that President Joe Biden's economic stimulus package will possibly include a windfall of almost half a billion dollars to the CNMI for government operations, so a law needs to be passed that requires that any expenditure of such funding

See BILL on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:
- **Red:** Least safe
- **Orange**
- **Yellow**
- **Blue**
- **Green:** Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

AT A GLANCE

As of 6pm, March 17, 2021

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	7,773	3	7,776
Recovered	7,616	2	7,618
Active	21	3	24
Deaths	134	0	134
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			135,075

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	156	0	156
Traced via Travel Screening	121	0	121
Traced via Community Screening	35	0	35
Deaths	2	0	2
Cumulative Number of Persons Tested			26,131*
Days since last community transmission			2

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Saipan:	Tinian:	Rota:
Dose 1: 11,753	Dose 1: 743	Dose 1: 843
Dose 2: 8,960	Dose 2: 268	Dose 2: 357

*Total count includes the number of persons tested on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota. With guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, CHCC has opted not to report active and recovered cases.

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.

INSIDE

SUPPLEMENT
This issue comes with a supplement to mark McDonald's Saipan's 28th anniversary today.
PAGE 9

BUSINESS
Candle J Saipan makes quality scented candles with premium fragrance oils and natural wax.
PAGE 13

NATION
Shootings at two massage parlors in Atlanta leave eight people of Asian descent dead.
PAGE 14

SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.

Local

Inmate is denied early release

The U.S. District Court for the NMI denied Wednesday the request of Leyda I. Ada to be immediately released from federal prison, saying that she does not merit early release and that she, in fact, is already due to be released to home confinement in a month.

Ada, who is serving a 27-month prison sentence at Dublin Satellite Prison Camp in California, has asked for early release from prison, saying her health condition makes her vulnerable to COVID-19.

The U.S. government, through assistant U.S. attorney Garth R. Backe, pointed out, though, that Ada only has obesity. He said Ada's obesity is not so severe that she should be released immediately. Although the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention includes obesity on its list of underlying conditions that can make one vulnerable to COVID-19, Backe said that Ada hasn't demonstrated that she is borderline obese, in a facility that has no inmate cases and has no inmate deaths.

"Indeed, defendant's argument, boiled down, is that being overweight—by itself— is sufficient. However, if that was true, the vast majority of prisoners would currently be eligible for release [if obesity qualified as an extraordinary and compelling reason for a sentence reduction]," said Backe in his response to Ada's emergency motion for modification of sentence.

Backe added that Ada is scheduled to be released to home confinement before April 14.

Ada asked for her sentence to be modified, believing that she qualifies for "compassionate release" due to her health condition. She added that the prison guards are fearful of being infected, and that inmates were "dropping like flies" and all cells were infected.

Dublin prison warden R. J. Garcia said that Ada's concern about being potentially exposed to or possibly contracting COVID-19 "does not warrant an early release from her sentence."

Ada was charged with conspiracy to commit money laundering and money laundering but was found guilty of perjury last April 2016.

Ada started serving her sentence shortly after the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit affirmed her conviction of perjury on July 30, 2019. ***(Justine Nauta)***

Project Liffang postponed until further notice

Due to the recent detection of COVID-19 community transmission, the United Carolinians Association has postponed its planned launch of Project Liffang until further guidance from the Governor's Covid-19 Task Force is issued.

"We keep those affected in our thoughts and prayers, and hope that the excellent work of the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and the front-liners to date prevents any further spread. We will inform the community of the new launch date of Project Liffang once it is decided," said UCA president Frank Rabauliman.

Project Liffang was supposed to kick off this coming Saturday, March 20, 2021, at the Carolinian Utt in Garapan.

The project, which is a UCA collaboration with the Carolinian Affairs Office and CNMI Women's Association, is intended to promote local entrepreneurship and help the community through these trying times. The project is the result of brainstorming among the UCA board of directors, which has been wanting to implement a community project since 2020. ***(PR)***

Who is being vaccinated?
How do I sign up?
Vaccination is OPEN for individuals 50 years+ OR People working in:
Grocery stores, restaurants (including catering) bakeries, wholesalers, commercial farming and fishing
Gas stations , electric or other energy and utilities companies
Taxi, other transportation, and delivery
Construction, maintenance, or rehabilitation of critical infrastructure
Hotel/lodging, maintaining business plazas, recreational facilities, or public events including sports federations
Barbers, salons, and massage therapy
Banks or insurance companies
Trash collection and other waste services
Schools, daycares, and colleges
Media & Telecommunications
CNMI (State/Local) Government Employees (All agencies)
COVID-19 Contractors employed by the CNMI Governor's Task Force
Faith-based groups
Healthcare
REGISTER
ONLINE at vaccinatecnmi.com
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Johnson & Johnson's Janssen COVID-19 vaccine is available for Saipan residents 65 years+
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VACCINATE CNMI WEBSITE: vaccinatecnmi.com
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PH suspends entry of foreigners and returning Filipinos who are not OFWs

The Philippine government has suspended the entry of foreign nationals and returning overseas Filipinos who are not overseas Filipino workers into the country starting Saturday, March 20 until Monday, April 19.

The National Task Force Against COVID-19 (NTF) also directed concerned agencies to limit the number of inbound international passengers to 1,500 a day.

These measures are meant to prevent a further rise in coronavirus cases as well as to prevent the entry of coronavirus variants from other countries.

Under Memorandum Circular No. 5, the following individuals are exempted from the entry ban:

- Holders of 9(c) visas
- Medical repatriation and their escort/s duly endorsed by the DFA-OUMWA or OWWA
- Distressed ROFs duly endorsed by DFA-OUMWA
- Emergency, humanitarian, and other analogous cases approved by the NTF-COVID-19

The measures were the latest in a series of moves to curb the alarming increase in the number of COVID-19 cases over the past few weeks.

Metro Manila, one of the regions hardest hit by the spike, has imposed a curfew from 10pm to 5am from March 15 to March 31.

Granular lockdowns and a prohibition on liquor sales have also been implemented.

The steep increase was monitored after the government eased restrictions on public transportation and some business establishments to restart the economy.

At present, the Philippines has recorded 117 UK variant cases, 90 South Africa variant cases, and 85 COVID-19 cases with the two mutations of concern.

On Monday, the Department of Health said that at least seven percent of the samples from COVID-19 cases in the country involved new variants of coronavirus.

The OCTA Research Group said the Philippines could see 11,000 new COVID-19 cases daily by the end of March as it noted an upward trend in infections.

Meanwhile, the Philippines has reported a total of 631,320 confirmed cases, of which 560,736 have recovered and 12,848 have died. ***(GMA News)***

Kilili to testify on lifting Medicaid caps

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) will testify today on the need to provide more funding for the Marianas Medicaid program. The House Energy and Commerce Subcommittee on Health has called a hearing to address the looming crisis for all the insular areas as temporary funding for Medicaid runs out Oct. 1.

Sablan secured over $124 million for Marianas Medicaid in the last Congress. But that one-time money will no longer be available at the end of fiscal year 2021.

Sablan has introduced legislation, H.R. 265, that would get rid of the fixed cap on Medicaid for U.S. territories permanently. His legislation has 60 cosponsors, including the House Appropriations Committee chair, Rep. Rosa DeLauro (D-Connecticut). The two Republicans who represent American Samoa and Puerto Rico have also cosponsored Sablan's legislation.

If the cap goes back into effect on Oct. 1, Medicaid funding for the Marianas will drop from $62.3 million in this fiscal year to $7.2 million in fiscal 2022. Guam, American Samoa, the Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico would all see similar 85 to 90% cuts.

Another 'cliff'

This is not the first time the insular Medicaid programs have faced a funding cliff. Using his authority as vice chair for Insular Affairs, Sablan called a hearing of the House Natural Resources Committee on May 23, 2019, to focus attention on the end of Medicaid funding from Obamacare that the Marianas and all the U.S. territories faced at the end of that fiscal year.

Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. chief executive officer Esther Muña and CNMI Medicaid director Helen Sablan, together with the Medicaid directors from all other insular areas, testified at Sablan's hearing—a first. The directors described the life and death choices they faced with limited funding.

Congress quickly responded with $120 million in new funding in Public Law 116-94 and again in Public Law 116-127 with additional money.

The health insurance Medicaid provides for persons with lower incomes has been especially important during the pandemic. Enrollment in the Marianas Medicaid program has doubled from about 16,000 two years ago to 32,000 now.

But Medicaid is important for everyone in the Marianas. Medicaid is almost half the revenues of the CHCC. And, according to CHCC, without that Medicaid income, the Marianas' only hospital would close.

With the additional funding Sablan secured, however, CHCC has been able to invest in better care. The hospital's new Oncology Center has reduced the need for off-islands referrals for cancer treatment from 307 patients in 2019 to just 25 last year. ***(PR)***

CHCC implements electronic vital registration system

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., through Axiell ALM Inc., a software vendor and consultant that specializes in software for registries and vital records, has successfully implemented the CNMI's first Electronic Vital Registration System on Dec. 31, 2020.

This major milestone achievement is in line with management's commitments and efforts in modernizing health information technologies at CHCC, leapfrogging the CNMI, the first in our region, with automated electronic capabilities, to securely transmit vital events information to the National Centers for Health Statistics. With the new EVRS, the following are some of the key initiatives envisioned by the management from this project:

■ Enables the CNMI to participate in Social Security Administration's Enumeration at Birth Program. The EAB is a program that allows parents to complete applications for Social Security Numbers for their newborns as part of the CHCC birth registration process;

■ Enables Tinian and Rota health centers to have Web access to the EVRS system;

■ Enables the CNMI to participate in the exchange of information with other approved stakeholders (states, local, and federal agencies) through the online Electronic Verification of Vital Events system;

■ Increased vital record security and fraud prevention;

■ Increased system interoperability for system integration with other CHCC data systems;

■ Improved morbidity and mortality surveillance program to monitor population health status;

■ Increased collaboration and efficiency of vital record reporting throughout the CNMI as well as disaster recovery and immediate service restoration;

■ Decreases reliance on paper-forms for health and vital statistics processes.

The EVRS implementation project has been funded and supported by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Centers for Health Statistics, and the National Association for Public Health Statistics and Information Systems, our non-profit partner organization representing vital records and public health statistics offices.

For more information regarding NCHS, visit: httbs://vvvvw.cdcsiovinchsiindex.htm.

For more information regarding NAPHSIS, visit: https://vvwvv.naphsis.orgi. ***(PR)***

2017 TOYOTA YARIS HATCHBACK
SALE PRICE $11,995
24,305 MILES • STK:17BC53703 • KBB: $12,676

2017 MAZDA MAZDA6 GT
SALE PRICE $15,995
44,751 MILES • STK:17P305 • KBB: $17,242

2019 MITSUBISHI OUTLANDER SE
SALE PRICE $18,995
11,486 MILES • STK:19HS967 • KBB: $19,633

2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
38,494 MILES • STK:7R235 • KBB: $16,146

2019 HYUNDAI KONA 2WD
SALE PRICE $16,995
11,761 MILES • STK:19HS962 • KBB: $18,793

2015 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER LE
SALE PRICE $18,995
62,811 MILES • STK:5HS735A • KBB: $19,031

2017 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $13,995
34,789 MILES • STK:7R218 • KBB: $15,129

2017 MAZDA CX-3 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $16,995
18,475 MILES • STK: 7P295 • KBB: $18,470

2013 TOYOTA TACOMA SR 4WD
SALE PRICE $23,995
130,884 MILES • STK:3P294 • KBB: $24,581

2016 TOYOTA PRIUS C
SALE PRICE $14,995
48,814 MILES • STK:20D134A • KBB: $16,585

2018 MAZDA MAZDA6 SPORT
SALE PRICE $16,995
7,365 MILES • STK:18HS965C • KBB: $22,095

2019 MAZDA CX-5 GT AWD
SALE PRICE $26,995
8,214 MILES • STK:19P299 • KBB: $28,460

2016 HYUNDAI VELOSTER
SALE PRICE $14,995
39,217MILES • STK: 20H068-A • KBB: $15,830

2019 HYUNDAI KONA
SALE PRICE $16,995
11,601 MILES • STK:19HS999 • KBB: $18,793

2018 TOYOTA TACOMA SR5
SALE PRICE $27,995
5,150 MILES • STK:21H019A • KBB: $29,446

2018 MAZDA MAZDA3 SPORT
SALE PRICE $14,995
7,910 MILES • STK:8HS875 • KBB: $19,496

2018 HONDA CIVIC EXT
SALE PRICE $17,995
10,640 MILES • STK:18HS946 • KBB: $20,609

2017 TOYOTA LANDCRUISER 4WD
SALE PRICE $69,995
28,046 MILES • STK:17P310 • KBB: $72,425

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Saipan Chamber of Commerce backs creation of CEDA

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce board of directors has expressed support for a bill in the House of Representatives that would create the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority as the primary agency tasked with the CNMI's economic diversification.

Chamber board of directors president Joe C. Guerrero informed Rep. Angel A. Demapan (R-Saipan), who is author of House Bill 22-21, that they believe CEDA is best positioned to promote, expand, and enhance economic development in the CNMI.

Co-authored by six other lawmakers, House Bill 22-21 would strengthen the tools and powers of the CNMI government and expand economic development.

Guerrero said that CEDA will have the tools it needs to support new business development, promote the expansion and retention of existing businesses, and allow the CNMI's private sector to thrive.

"H.B. 22-21 is truly a revenue-generating bill, as it allows for new dollars to enter the Commonwealth to grow our economy and support our families," said the Chamber president in his letter to Demapan last Tuesday.

Demapan stated in the bill that the CNMI economy requires a renewed focus on economic development and diversification to provide jobs, and economic opportunity to a community that has been beleaguered with natural disasters, global crisis, and the lingering impacts of the widespread collapse of the manufacturing sector that has resulted in volatilities inherent within an undiversified economy.

The lawmaker said a targeted focus of a single governmental entity to plan for and implement efforts to cultivate a stronger, more diversified economy for the CMMI is necessary in establishing competitiveness against locations vying for global investments.

Senate President Jude U. Hofschneider (R-Tinian) has introduced a similar bill that will rename the Commonwealth Development Authority into the Commonwealth Economic Development Authority and repurpose as the primary agency tasked with the economic development of the CNMI.

A longer version of this story is available at www. saipantribune.com

FitBeat marathon proceeds donated to CHCC

By JUSTINE NAUTA
justine_nauta@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

More than 150 people participated in the first FitBeat marathon last March 13 at the Roundhouse in Garapan, raising more than $750 that was donated to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. to buy hospital gowns

In an interview via Facebook messenger with event coordinator Irene Holl, she said that 150 people participated in their Zumba marathon, with an additional 30 people from the FitBeat Tinian group joining virtually. Holl said the ticket prices for the marathon was $5, which is how they raised over $750.

The money went to hospital gowns and was also donated to the CHCC volunteers who went to support the event.

Holl said the marathon had health screenings before they moved onto their Zumba program. She added that the Lions Club Region 204 distributed 106 reading glasses. The Zumba session was led by instructors Joel Vallega, Angie Bautista, Bobby Sanje, and Shellan Sarmiento, and with the participation of Holl.

It was learned that the FitBeat program is a program under first lady Diann T. Torres and Lt. Gov Arnold I. Palacios's wife, Wella Palacios.

Holl said the marathon was sponsored by the Saipan Fitbeat Lions Club, Rotary Club of Saipan, and the Department of Community and Cultural Affair's Child Care Development Fund.

FitBeat classes are offered from Monday through Saturdays—5:30pm-6:15pm is reserved for the core class and the Zumba class is from 6:30pm to 7:30pm.

According to *Saipan Tribune* archives, the FitBeat program was established last July 2019, and was expanded after the Saipan Lions Club teamed up with Torres and Palacios to offer the classes.

LONGER

From Page 1

For one, being approved for home quarantine is not automatic. Those who want to avail of this option have to apply for it first (at the governor.gov.mp website) 72 hours before their arrival in the CNMI. Also, it strictly applies only to returning CNMI residents who have been fully vaccinated and had obtained their vaccinations in the CNMI, according to the CHCC guidelines issued Tuesday.

Muña also said that individuals who are approved for home quarantine can expect surprise visits from the Department of Public Safety to ensure that you are where you're supposed to be. If not, the individual can be subjected to a longer quarantine time period.

In a media conference with Muña yesterday, she said those who are in home quarantine can expect consequences for violating an agreement between them and CHCC and the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force. Should the individual violate the agreement, Muña said they can be brought from where they are quarantined to the government facility and may have to start the quarantine over again. For example, if an individual was four days into home quarantine but left their home for a store run and DPS caught them, this individual could be brought back to the government facility where they will restart the five-day quarantine.

Muña said that they are able to offer more qualified individuals the option to apply for this quarantine procedure because of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's guidance and because they have the means to control a public health situation.

"Public health is not stagnant. Decisions are made based on what we know, and what we can control," said Muña. "The ability to be able to put surveillance, the ability to contain and control any public health crisis is how we can have an effective public health system. A public health crisis exists in different forms, but there is a way to contain it, but also we need to adjust and transform as we go along."

Even with the family cluster who tested positive for COVID-19 last weekend, the testing capability, the contact tracing, and quarantine facilities the CNMI now has is how CHCC and the task force was able to respond quickly and help contain a larger transmission, she said.

Muña also disclosed that of about 50 inbound travelers yesterday, only five people have already applied for home quarantine. Additionally, she clarified that home quarantine is optional, and if an individual wants to stay at a government facility, they can.

SABLAN

From Page 1

gress loosen the federal purse strings for these types of projects.

In his letter to Camacho, the delegate said the American Rescue Plan includes an estimated $483 million for the Commonwealth to use for water and sewer infrastructure, among other permissible needs. He said this law is likely to be followed by an American Recovery Plan, also with significant infrastructure funding.

In order to ensure the Commonwealth receives the most generous allocation of funds possible in this prospective legislation, Sablan said the need and cost analyses on core infrastructure from CUC would be invaluable.

Sablan is particularly interested in supporting development on potable water, protecting water supplies and coastal waters, and reduction of power costs.

Sablan pointed out that virtually all Saipan households now have 24-hour water, thanks to significant increases in Safe Drinking Water Act funding for the CNMI. The next step, Sablan said, is to make water safe to drink out of the tap.

He asked Camacho if CUC has a plan to achieve this goal for Saipan, Tinian, and Rota, and the progression of actions needed and cost estimates of each step.

Sablan said that achieving the first goal of potable water for Saipan requires conservation of the Kagman aquifer, which will require a wastewater treatment facility. CUC's 2015 Draft Final Wastewater Master Plan identified 57 needed projects, presumably including a Kagman treatment facility, but only anticipates funding available for 24 of these projects over the period from 2015 through 2035.

Sablan asked Camacho to provide a complete list of the projects completed over the intervening six years and the costs for those remaining to complete in order to achieve the goals for wastewater management set out in his (Camacho's) plan.

As for power costs, the delegate said diesel remains among the costliest means to generate electrical power, so he has been working to increase funding over the last several years for the Energizing Island Communities project, run by the Department of the Interior.

Sablan's goal is to reduce costs for consumers in the Marianas by shifting to cheaper, domestic, renewable energy sources and by increasing system efficiencies.

He asked Camacho to share with him CUC's plan for development of the power systems on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota so that he has a basis for continuing advocacy for funding.

Sablan said he has been quite successful at obtaining capital improvement funding over the last 12 years, both through increases in Safe Drinking Water Act and Clean Water Act annual grants, as well as through special infrastructure appropriations, such as the $10.4 million for water and sewer and the $56 million for solid waste facilities in Public Law 116-20.

BILL

From Page 1

from the federal government be approved by the Legislature.

As such, any expenditure of Coronavirus State Fiscal Recovery Fund monies must be subject to appropriation by the Legislature, he said, with the Office of the Public Auditor creating a task force to monitor expenditure of all such monies and reporting on the task force's findings quarterly to the Legislature.

During last Tuesday's session, some Republican lawmakers questioned the rush to place the bill on the calendar. Lawmakers subsequently reached a compromise to allow the bill to remain on the agenda.

Manglona explained that, with the way the law is written, the money is expected to come within 60 days and that there is a need for the Legislature to quickly act on the appropriation.

Rep. Joseph Lee Pan Guerrero (R-Saipan) said the language of the bill is to appropriate, but this is a federal money and not the money that the CNMI collected.

"I don't see that we are authorized to appropriate federal money," said Guerrero.

House legal counsel Joseph Taijeron said he agrees with Guerrero, but stated that Manglona sees the need to actually establish the authority. "And that's why this bill, this legislation is pretty important," Taijeron said.

Guerrero also wants to know if the federal government has assured that the Legislature can do this appropriation. "I want something in black and white that the federal is saying, 'Yes, the CNMI can appropriate this funding.' We haven't seen this money. We haven't seen the guideline. I want to see the guideline," Guerrero added.

Stressing that he needs to see a spending plan and other things, Guerrero objected to moving forward to put the bill on calendar.

"Because what if it's the language in there and the authority remains with the governor? What's the purpose of this piece of legislation?" he asked.

Rep. Christina E. Sablan (D-Saipan) noted that the motion that Manglona offered is to take the bill on calendar but not for action that day.

Sablan said the American Rescue Plan is providing the Commonwealth and most other states and territories an unprecedented windfall of federal money that are intended to support the government operations and to address shortfalls in revenue.

Sablan said what Manglona's bill proposes is to assert that authority to require the expenditure plan be reviewed by the Legislature first prior to certification to the U.S. Treasury.

She said House members will have time to review the specific legislation, the language on the American Rescue Plan, and also review the merits of what this bill is proposing, the checks and balances transparency and accountability for a lot of money that the Commonwealth has never seen before, that the CNMI is expected to spend responsibly over the next two years.

Sablan said there will be time for members to better understand what is being proposed, and why it's important that they act quickly.

Sablan said as Manglona explained, time is of the essence, and if the money comes in and there are no checks and balances, then there will be no opportunity for them to act proactively and ensure that these funds are responsibly managed.

FBI

From Page 1

specifics of ongoing investigations and inquiries. Ernst said that due to the nature of the ongoing investigation, they have no further comments.

Photos that were widely circulated on social media last Tuesday showed FBI agents taking boxes—later confirmed to be client information—from the RR & Associates Corp. office in Garapan. It was not learned what the visit was all about as the investigation continues to evolve.

In an interview last Tuesday with Rufo Mafnas, who co-owns RR & Associates, he said the boxes involved confidential client tax information but he was not able to comment further.

FBI agents were carrying boxes and transferring them to a silver Ford F-150 pickup truck. Bystanders in the area and Mafnas said there were four FBI agents who came to collect what they needed.

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(HC-C503)
SALE PRICE $79.99

4 FT 2 SLIDING DOORS WARDROBE
(WD-B402)
SALE PRICE $149.99

3 DOORS WARDROBE
(CW-4018)
SALE PRICE $129.99

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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Jayvee L. Vallejera EDITOR
editor@saipantribune.com

Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com

MEMBER

The Associated Press | Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Attacks on Asian Americans must be forcefully condemned

Over the weekend, Maryland Gov. Larry Hogan was asked on CNN about attacks on Asian Americans during the COVID-19 pandemic, and his response was direct and forceful calling them "outrageous" and "unacceptable." The governor has some direct knowledge of this. His wife, Yumi Hogan, is Korean American, and he told host Jake Tapper on "State of the Union" that she, their three daughters and their grandchildren have suffered its effects.

"We feel it personally with my daughter, who sort of is sometimes afraid to come visit us, with people who had best friends that were being harassed at the grocery store, or being called names, and people yelling about the China virus, even though they're from Korea and born in America," Gov. Hogan said.

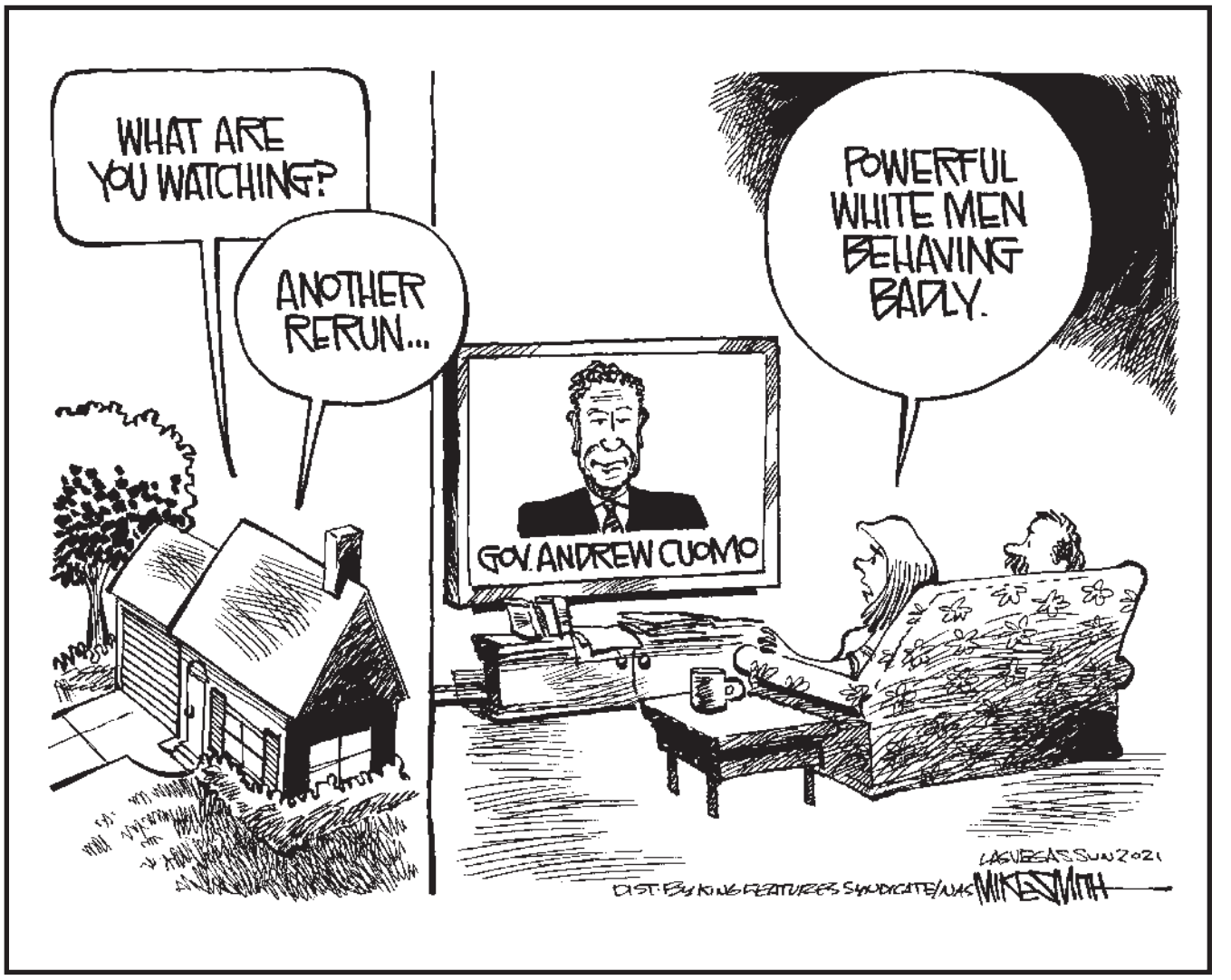
Such behavior is unconscionable, and we commend Gov. Hogan for his frank talk. It's a point the Republican governor made several days earlier, too, posting on social media a 2018 photograph of his family with a shout-out to President Joe Biden, a Democrat, for condemning hate crime attacks on Asian Americans in a national address from the White House last Thursday. In that speech, President Biden called such incidents "vicious" and "un-American." The president observed how Asian Americans, some of them front-line workers in the pandemic, were being "attacked, harassed, blamed and scapegoated." And he was correct: It is happening with shameful frequency.

A new study from the Center for the Study of Hate & Extremism found anti-Asian hate crimes in the nation's largest cities is up 149% in 2020 compared to an overall drop in hate crimes of 7% during the same period. In New York City, for example, the number of anti-Asian hate crimes rose by nearly tenfold between 2019 and 2020. The study's authors speculate that such incidents are greatly underreported as these are only cases which result in a police report. Victims of hate crimes are frequently fearful of reprisal and reluctant to contact authorities.

It's not difficult to see what's going on here. Then-President Donald Trump took particular glee in referring to COVID-19 as the "China virus" or "kung flu," and he did so again and again at rallies to the point where anything China or Chinese would draw a chorus of angry boos and catcalls from his supporters. It was exactly the kind of frenzy that he conjured four years earlier when speaking out against Mexican and Central American immigrants. There was no subtlety here, no policy point, it was all about anger and hatred and an America First vision that judges nonwhites as the enemy. Nor did it help that China became the favored boogie man of the Republican right-wing raising furor to a level reminiscent of the Red Scare when hate-mongers in the late '40s and early '50s were convinced that the People's Republic of China was bent on invasion by first infiltrating the highest levels of government.

That's not to suggest the U.S. doesn't have legitimate policy disputes with China. Of course, we do. China represents

See ATTACKS on Next Page



What we've learned from our year of living pandemically

By ROBIN ABCARIAN
Los Angeles Times

Robin Abcarian is an opinion columnist at the Los Angeles Times.

What an awful—and inspiring—year we have just had, so full of suffering and sadness, yet also with so much hope.

As we emerge from a nightmare that has claimed the lives of more than half a million Americans, we will never forget the sights of loved ones bidding goodbye through windows, corpses stacked in refrigerator trucks and the spike of fear accompanying a sore throat, headache or fever.

We'll long remember the shock of empty grocery store shelves, of empty schoolyards and stadiums, shuttered restaurants and hair salons, and the desolation of roads whose rush-hour traffic normally bedevils us. And, much as we might like to, we won't forget President Donald Trump standing behind his lectern, denigrating masks, championing discredited remedies and spewing false information with certainty about a virus scientists were still struggling to understand.

Who will ever forget the image of our nation's foremost public health expert, Dr. Anthony Fauci, in full face palm, as Trump blathered about the "Deep State Department" in the White House press room? Or the look of sheer helplessness and resignation on the face of immunologist Dr. Deborah Birx when he suggested injecting COVID-19 patients with disinfectant?

And then, amid all the horror of a raging pandemic swirling across the globe, cutting down everyone from strong adults in their prime to the vulnerable elderly in nursing homes, a different kind of galvanizing tragedy appeared on the horizon.

Two and a half months into our national lockdown, a Black man named George Floyd lost his life under the knee of a white police officer. Maybe it was impossible to mourn each victim of the pandemic, but we could all rise up in outrage against the crisis of systemic racial bias, police violence and the blatant disregard for the lives of Black Americans, many of whose first names we came to know: Breonna, Ahmaud, Tamir, Philando, Trayvon.

Protests, many of them spontaneous, swept the nation. Millions of people—mostly masked—gathered in a mass uprising against racism that historians have described as the largest such outpouring in American history. The vast majority of the gatherings—and by vast, I mean more than 93%, according to a nonprofit group that studies protests and political violence around the world—were peaceful.

The world shifted a bit on its axis; the unfinished work of the civil rights movement was laid bare. The rise in hate crimes against Asian Americans demonstrated—as if we needed proof—the ties that bind words to action; a president who constantly denigrates Chinese people, or Mexicans, will embolden racists.

I will always be awed by Washington, D.C., Mayor Muriel Bowser's wonderful act of anti-racism. Last June, her Public Works Department painted "Black Lives Matter" in yellow block letters 35 feet tall on the street in the shadow of the White House, in a perfect retort to the dog whistles and outright racism of the man who lived there.

And in July, another memorable image emerged: In Portland, Oregon, an unclothed woman who came to be known as Naked Athena, stepped into the street and struck ballet poses as she faced heavily armed federal agents whose presence had been opposed by state and city officials.

In the midst of the most severe public health crisis in a century, our sense of decency and righteousness was on full display.

As we would discover on Jan. 6, violent white supremacists suckered by Trump would try to have the last word.

We discovered our country is too good for them to prevail.

■■■

So, of all the things the pandemic has wrought, can we thank it for cutting short the tenure of the country's worst president?

Maybe.

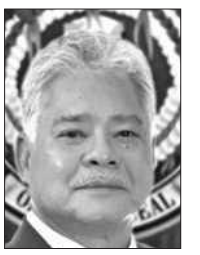
No one can say for sure that Trump's mishandling of the outbreak was the single thing that brought him down, but the crashed economy combined with his lack of urgency or focus on another much-needed stimulus package, months of denial about the virus and his sheer unlikability surely contributed to Joe Biden's decisive victory.

That was followed by the unexpected flipping of Georgia's two U.S. Senate seats, an extraordinary feat for Democrats, which gave them a reed-thin majority (with Vice President Ka-

See LEARNED on Next Page

'A historic and important achievement for indigenous people'

By RALPH DLG TORRES and ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune



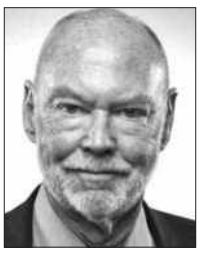
Ralph DLG Torres is governor of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. and Arnold I. Palacios is the lieutenant governor.

Editor's Note: Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and Lt. Gov. Arnold I. Palacios issues the following statement on the Senate confirmation of Rep. Deb Haaland as Secretary of the Interior:

"On behalf of the people of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, we congratulate Rep. Haaland on her confirmation as our nation's Secretary of the Interior. As a woman of indigenous descent, her appointment is a historic and important achievement for indigenous people all over the country. She has been an advocate of indigenous rights and natural resource protection, and we support her as she assumes this important Cabinet position in our federal government. We look forward to working with her and the Office of Insular Affairs on discussing issues and promoting policies that are important to the CNMI and the territories. It is our collective hope that we can work for the betterment of the people of our entire nation and our Commonwealth here in the Pacific."

Whether you like it or not, Biden's COVID-19 relief plan is the result of a historic election

By GEORGE SKELTON
Los Angeles Times



Political columnist George Skelton has covered government and politics for nearly 60 years and for the LA Times *since 1974.*

It's pounded into us that elections have consequences. And many people will soon feel it in their pocketbooks.

Not one Republican in Congress voted for President Joe Biden's $1.9 trillion coronavirus relief package and no Democrat voted against it.

The historic legislation's enactment was a consequence of Americans choosing a Democratic president, leaving a razor-thin Democratic majority in the House and turning over control of the Senate—barely—to Democrats.

The measure was the latest in a series of federal relief packages that have pumped roughly $4 trillion into the economy for individuals, businesses, states and local governments in the last year.

In Sacramento, Gov. Gavin Newsom and the Legislature have also been spending like money's no object—and it hasn't been—to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

That's the consequence of California voters electing a lopsided one-party government in which Democrats completely dominate. Republicans are in no position to negotiate. And if they oppose any Democratic offering—which they generally haven't on COVID-19 relief—no one notices.

I'll be the skunk at the Democrats' celebratory picnic and admit I'm not convinced all that spending is really needed. Nice to be on the receiving end, yes. But actually necessary—at the expense of driving up the national debt even higher? Doubtful.

And Sacramento politicians eating into state government's surplus when the state has so many needs, including reducing homelessness and preventing wildfires? I'm skeptical.

Republican members of Congress weren't totally wrong to oppose the Democrats' bill. Unfortunately, rather than bargain in good faith, their goal seemingly was to delay the new president's first major victory while landing as many blows as they could.

Look, everyone would like to receive a $1,400 check. But not everyone who'll be getting one really deserves to.

For example, my adult grandchildren. (Sorry, kids.) None of them lost their jobs or suffered financially because of the pandemic. But they'll be gifted $1,400 each. That kind of money should go to people smacked hard by the health crisis, not just anyone making less than $75,000 annually.

Couples who file their taxes jointly will receive $1,400 each—$2,800 total—if their household income is less than $150,000. They'll get it regardless of whether they were hurt by the pandemic.

There should have been some proof of need required before Biden and Democrats just tossed money out the Treasury door. Maybe that would be too difficult for a government agency to handle.

Another relative received a $20,000 small-business loan last year under a pandemic relief act. Then she decided the money wasn't needed and has been trying to repay it. But she can't reach any federal employee—by phone or mail—to tell her how to send back the money.

Sacramento has been the capital of scandal because of its incompetent handling of expanded unemployment benefits. At least $11 billion, and perhaps as much as $30 billion, was paid to fraudulent claims by Newsom's Employment Development Department. Much of the wasted money went to imprisoned criminals and foreign gangs.

The federal government's pandemic aid has been compared in size and heft to President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal relief during the Great Depression. But most of FDR's programs were targeted at job creation and putting people to work.

The U.S. and California governments have provided a staggering list of benefits to people, schools and businesses. Most people are beneficiaries of the federal largess. Even if you're not, your taxes will be paying for it—and long into the future.

Biden's American Rescue Plan will pump more than $150 billion into California's economy. Nearly half of that will go directly to people in the form of $1,400 payments and expanded unemployment benefits—assuming the state EDD gets its act together.

Roughly $42 billion will be sent to California state government, counties and cities. The state will receive $26 billion and local governments will split $16 billion.

Under the act, states aren't allowed to use the federal money for tax cuts. But fat chance California would do that anyway. Aside from this restriction, Newsom and legislators have wide discretion to spend the money as they wish.

To put the new federal aid in perspective, it's roughly 11% of the $227 billion state budget Newsom proposed for the next fiscal year starting July 1.

"As a California resident, I should be happy the state is receiving all this money, but it's not deserved," says Jon Coupal, president of the Howard Jarvis Taxpayers Association.

"The biggest problem is that it takes away any incentive to achieve structural reform in things like education and [public] pensions. When it's given all this money, the state is just going to behave in a profligate manner."

Coupal cited "a shocking analysis" by the nonpartisan Tax Foundation showing that the federal act's total relief for states—$195 billion—amounts to 116 times all the revenue the states lost in 2020.

Actually, California state government is working on an estimated $25-billion surplus, although it has been eating away at the stash.

Newsom and the Legislature spent $7.6 billion on a state stimulus package that, among other things, will send $600 payments to low-income Californians.

They appropriated $6.6 billion to prod schools into reopening classrooms.

And they're about to authorize $2.3 billion in business tax breaks.

There's lots of tax money flying around to be given away.

At least this should end any liberal fantasies of raising state taxes even higher. But it won't.

Whether you like any of this or not, it's the end result of the last elections.

'A significant moment'

By LOU LEON GUERRERO
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Lou Leon Guerrero is governor of Guam.

Editor's Note: The Office of the Governor of Guam issued the following statement on the confirmation of Rep. Deb Haaland as President Joe Biden's secretary of the Department of the Interior:

"As the first Native American to lead the Department of Interior and hold a Cabinet position, this is a significant moment. Rep. Haaland has devoted her life to protecting our natural resources and our nation's indigenous heritage for future generations. We look forward to working with her to advance policies that would preserve and restore our land, increase outdoor recreational opportunities, and tackle the serious issue of climate change—policies that benefit Guam and our sister territories."

ATTACKS

From Page 6

a national security threat as do Russia, North Korea and Iran, to name some others. But our dispute is on policy, not people. And unsupported claims that China deliberately unleashed the coronavirus or that it was even bioengineered in a government lab have been mindlessly repeated again and again to anger Americans. Even now, despite Trump's departure from the White House, others have picked up the bile-spewing xenophobia: Last fall, no fewer than 164 Republicans in the U.S. House of Representatives voted against legislation condemning racist attacks on Asian Americans related to COVID. It was dismissed by some as too "woke."

That's right, apparently it's just too politically correct to be against the 2,800 incidents of anti-Asian hate, including assaults, that took place between March 19 and Dec. 31, 2020, according to the advocacy group Stop AAPI Hate. Those attacks have included the stabbing of three members of an Asian American family outside a Midland, Texas, Sam's Club (including a 2-year-old and 6-year-old) almost exactly one year ago by an attacker who thought they were Chinese and attempting to knowingly infect people with the virus.

Enough is enough. It's never been acceptable to senselessly attack people on the basis of race or nationality, gender or creed, religion, sexual orientation or anything else whether there's a virus or whatever the layers of ignorance involved. On this matter, America's leaders ought to speak with one voice so that there's no mistaking the truth: Stop the bullying, harassment and hate. Not in the times of COVID-19, not before and not after.

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LEARNED

From Page 6

mala Harris to cast tie-breaking votes), and in turn has led to the most progressive legislation to be passed by Congress since President Barack Obama's Affordable Care Act in 2010.

The American Rescue Plan will not just put money into the pockets of most Americans and extend unemployment benefits but will dramatically reduce the rate of child poverty and lift an estimated 16 million people out of poverty. It will give states money to administer COVID-19 vaccines and reopen schools.

Despite the fact that more than 75% of Americans support it, not one Republican in either the House or the Senate voted for it. No wonder Georgia went blue.

Our Year of Living Pandemically has taught us so much about ourselves.

We can honor the sacrifices inflicted on so many Americans by remembering that our job, and the government's, is to lift those in need, to respect what science and experience have taught us, and to atone for the sins of our past.

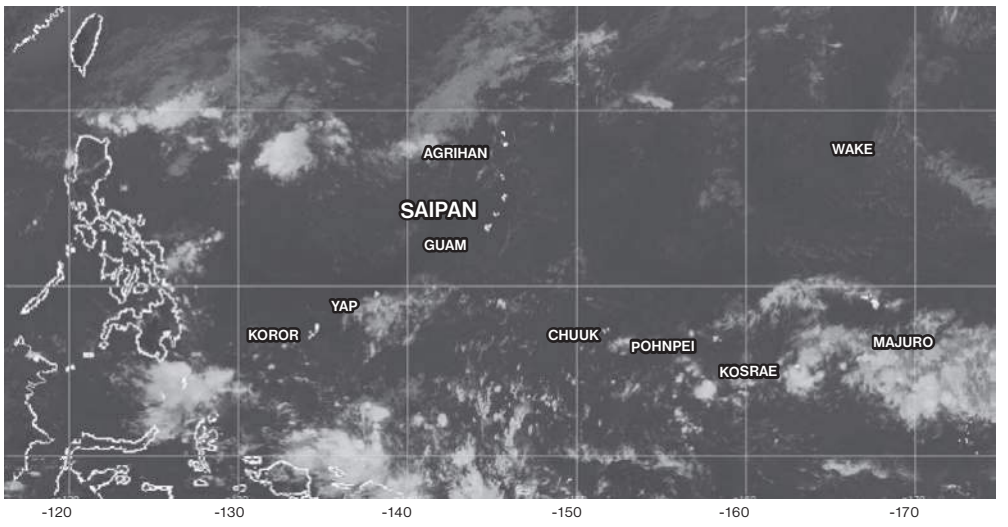
Maybe I am naïve, but I believe most Americans would agree. After a really terrible year, the cold winter feels as if it's beginning to yield to a much warmer and sunnier spring.

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy. Scattered showers becoming isolated around midday. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 5 to 15 mph.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy. Isolated light showers.
87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°	87° 77°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:52 AM, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 17, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Early morning satellite imagery shows partly cloudy skies and some showers moving through the Marianas. MIMIC TPW best depicts a series of weak trade-wind troughs near and east of the Marianas as several areas of higher atmospheric moisture content ranging between 1.8in and 2.1in. Overnight scatterometer data shows moderate to fresh trades with buoys and altimetry data indicating 5 to 7 foot seas.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESIA		▲ ▼ °F
Guam and Rota	Overcast	85 | 77 °F
Palau	Overcast	84 | 77 °F
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	82 | 71 °F
Chuuk	Overcast	82 | 79 °F
Pohnpei	Overcast	80 | 77 °F
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	85 | 78 °F
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	79 | 69 °F

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Friday	6:22 AM	6:27 PM
Saturday	6:21 AM	6:27 PM
Sunday	6:20 AM	6:28 PM
Monday	6:19 AM	6:28 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	9:22 AM	10:20 PM	-
Friday	10:01 AM	11:10 PM	-
Saturday	10:44 AM	-	-
Sunday	-	12:01 AM	11:30 AM
Monday	-	12:54 AM	12:20 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		▲ ▼ °F
Auckland	Clear	70 | 54 °F
Beijing	Clear	63 | 34 °F
Hong Kong	Scattered Clouds	67 | 63 °F
Honolulu	Mostly Cloudy	82 | 69 °F
London	Mostly Cloudy	58 | 42 °F
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	84 | 56 °F
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	90 | 76 °F
Melbourne	Clear	91 | 74 °F
Miami	Partly Cloudy	73 | 51 °F
New York	Clear	27 | 21 °F
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	51 | 40 °F
Paris	Overcast	55 | 39 °F
Pusan	Clear	55 | 31 °F
Rome	Clear	67 | 40 °F
Salem	Overcast	59 | 52 °F
San Francisco	Clear	77 | 51 °F
Seoul	Clear	54 | 28 °F
Tokyo	Overcast	44 | 37 °F
Washington, DC	Partly Cloudy	32 | 21 °F

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY		FEET
4:36 AM	Low Tide	0.74
10:08 AM	High Tide	1.63
5:05 PM	Low Tide	0.24
11:32 PM	High Tide	1.51

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF MARCH 5, 2021

DEPARTURES

SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)

UA117	6:55am	7:35am	1, 5, 6
UA117	7:00am	7:40am	4

SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)

UA117/183	6:55am	9:50pm	1, 5 via Guam

GUAM-MANILA (MNL)

UA183	8:00pm	9:50pm	1, 3, 5

ARRIVALS

GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN

UA174	5:10am	5:51am	1, 5, 6
UA174	5:15am	5:56am	4

MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN

UA184/174	10:55pm	5:56am+1	3 via Guam
UA184/174	10:40pm	5:51am+1	5 via Guam

MANILA (MNL)-GUAM

UA184	10:40pm	4:30am+1	5
UA184	10:55pm	4:45am+1	1, 3

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); UA United Airlines • ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. *(The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)*

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 9, 2021

SAIPAN TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1301	8:30AM	9:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
1302	11:00AM	11:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri/Sat
1303	3:30PM	4:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3101	9:30AM	10:00AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri
3102	12:00AM	12:30AM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri/Sat
3103	4:30PM	5:00PM	Mon/Tues/Wed/ Thurs/Fri/Sun

ROTA TO GUAM

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
3401	12:15	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable

GUAM TO ROTA

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
4301	13:00	13:30	Temporarily Unavailable

SAIPAN TO TINIAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
1201	7:00	7:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1202	8:00	8:15	Daily
1203	9:00	9:15	Daily
1204	10:00	10:15	Daily
1205	11:00	11:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1206	12:00	12:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1207	13:00	13:15	Temporarily Unavailable
1208	14:00	14:15	Daily
1209	15:00	15:15	Daily
1210	16:00	16:15	Daily
1211	17:00	17:15	Daily
1212	17:00	17:15	Temporarily Unavailable

TINIAN TO SAIPAN

FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY
2101	7:30	7:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2102	8:30	8:45	Daily
2103	9:30	9:45	Daily
2104	10:30	10:45	Daily
2105	11:30	11:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2106	12:30	12:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2107	13:30	13:45	Temporarily Unavailable
2108	14:30	14:45	Daily
2109	15:30	15:45	Daily
2110	16:30	16:45	Daily
2111	17:30	17:45	Daily
2112	18:30	18:45	Temporarily Unavailable

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.
- Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.
- Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.
- Create a household plan of action, https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html
- Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

- Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.
- Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

- Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:
- ❏ Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.
- ❏ Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- ❏ Avoiding touching your eyes, nose, and mouth with unwashed hands.
- ❏ Limiting visitors

CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 Infoline at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561 These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30 pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mpand, follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Rumor control

During crises like this, oftentimes the spread of misinformation is just as dangerous as the virus itself. The CNMI is reminded to only share official and verified notices, press releases, and advisories from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and CHCC.

Source: Office of the Governor

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'The community is our bread and butter'

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Ayuyu

McDonald's is celebrating its 28th anniversary today in a milestone that gives Joe Ayuyu Jr., vice president of McDonald's of Guam and Saipan, a brief time to step back, exhale, and look back at everything that led to this milestone. Ayuyu credits this important period in the history of McDonald's of Saipan to hard work, dedication and giving importance to every customer.

"We are humbled and grateful to reach McDonald's of Saipan's 28th anniversary. We feel that our customers believe in us and showed the loyalty that kept us in business, especially in a small community where our repeat customers are our bread and butter and particularly now that we don't have our transient customer base of tourists," he said.

Ayuyu said his parents have always instilled in him the idea that it is the community that makes their business successful "and that's why it's so important to give back."

Being a part of the community means being a good neighbor, he said, and that includes helping out after natural disasters like typhoons and the current pandemic happen. "We're lucky enough to be there for the community when they need us most. …They trust us. When typhoons happen, not all businesses can reopen immediately so we try to open right away because we know our community depends on us," he added.

For over a year now, the pandemic has ravaged businesses all over the world and Saipan is no exception. While everyone was groping in the dark on how to continue to remain open for business, Ayuyu knew they had to adjust. "The biggest challenge in the beginning was the safety of our employees and customers and adjusting to all the protocols. We had to change our old processes to be able to meet the new criteria of safety and sanitation. We overcame this with help from our McDonald's resources and the local Department of Public Health to ensure that we were in compliance as soon as possible," he said.

File photos show the McDonald's Middle Road branch soon after its opening in 1993 and the Ayuyu family posing with guests on opening day.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTOS

"Another challenge was dealing with 'fear' in both our staff and our customers. We knew we have to treat this as a priority. We needed to help them overcome this fear. We needed our staff to come in to work to serve our customers. We had to assure our employees and customers that they are safe by giving them information, educating them, helping them understand the virus, how it spreads and how to prevent the spread," he added.

The pandemic may have delayed renovation plans but that doesn't mean the work won't happen. "… We still intend to complete our plans. …What we are most excited about is the renovation and bringing a new, modernized, fresh look to McDonald's. Part of this change is called 'Experience of the Future,' which will bring in digital menu boards, self-ordering kiosks and modernized seating and décor for our dining area. …We're also looking forward to bringing back the community's favorites such as McRib and Shamrock Shake," Ayuyu said.

"…We're lucky to be able to give opportunities for employment to the community…and also offer our employees [the] opportunity for career advancement. …We thank the community for their continued support of McDonald's despite the pandemic. They still come and trust that we serve them delicious food safely and with safety measures inside our restaurant. …We truly are all in this together," he added.

For Ayuyu, he just doesn't 'sell' products, he is also a fan of them. "I love the food! My favorites are Bacon Quarter Pounder Sandwich, Spicy Chicken Sandwich, Oreo McFlurry, and Strawberry Crème Pie. I also love the people I work with for they are like family and the challenges that everyday brings because it's always different and my days are never the same. I love seeing our customers happy when they're eating at McDonald's," he said.

Anniversary
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McDonald's recognizes 2020 Employees of the Year

By NEIL FAMA
neil_fama@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

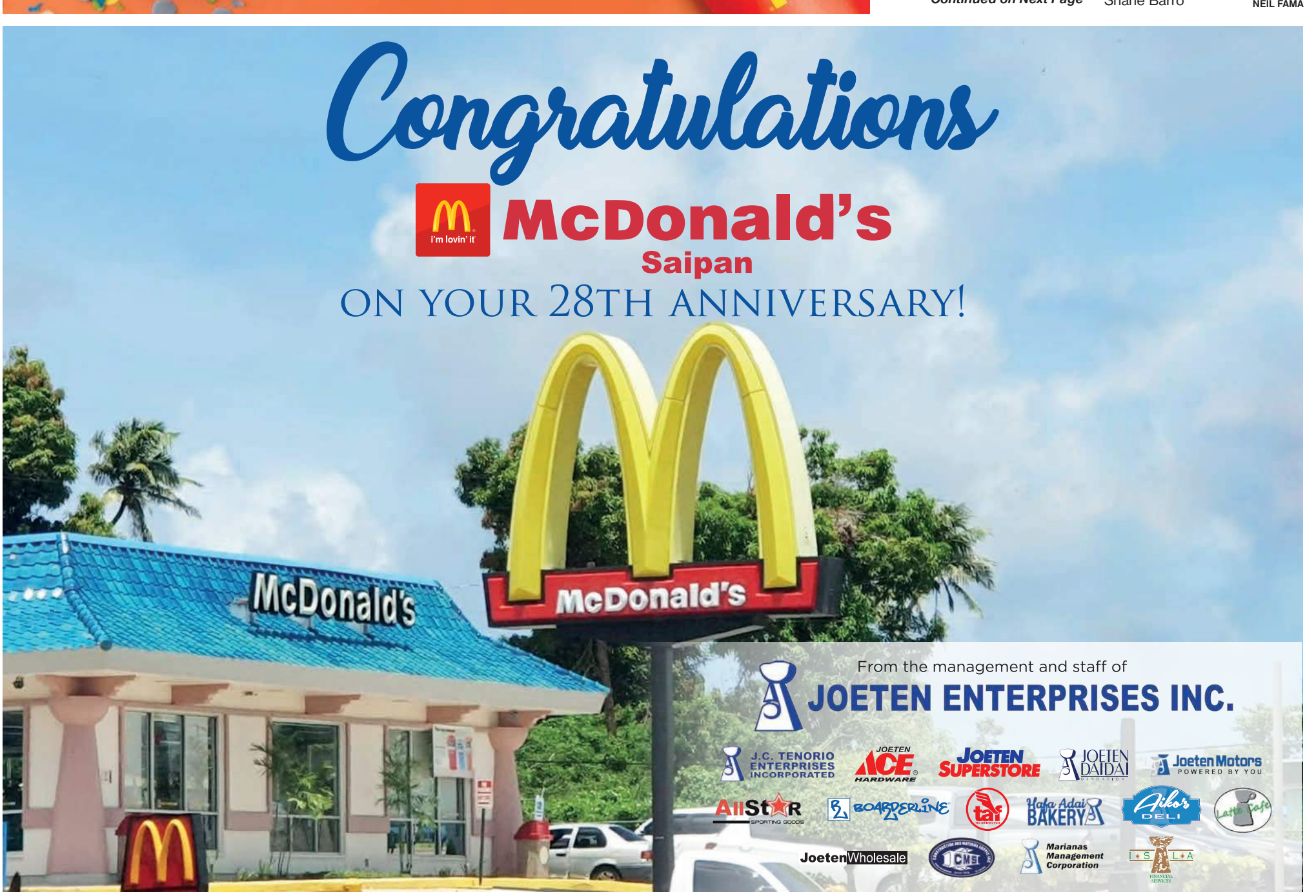
McDonald's Saipan recognized two individuals as its Employees of the Year for 2020: Shane Barro, who was its Employee of the Year at its Middle Road branch, and Rinie Fiden, who was the 2020 Employee of the Year at McDonald's Beach Road branch.

For Barro, who has only worked at the fast food restaurant for only one year and it being her first job ever, the award came as a big surprise. "As you know, McDonald's is very popular, and being here on Saipan, it was immediately my first option. I applied at a couple other places, but McDonald's was the first to call me back. On the day of my interview, they hired me," she said.

As an all-round worker and a newbie at her job, Barro said that one of the difficult parts of her job was learning the different procedures

Continued on Next Page

Shane Barro NEIL FAMA



From Page 10

at the different stations. "I'm thankful because I have a lot of coworkers who help me do just that. Coworkers help keep things exciting, we help each other learn more things and that's pretty much the average day in the workplace here."

When asked what she felt she did to deserve the award, Barro, who is just 23, believes it was going to work on time and maintaining a consistently good performance. As long as an individual enjoys their job and as long as they're committed, you won't feel that tired because you love your job, she added. "If you really love your job, you are able to do it without any sort of award in mind. Your devotion to the work itself is enough to keep you going," she said. "I'm so thankful that my hard work on the floor was noticed and appreciated. Thankful for the opportunity to receive the award."

Fiden also described herself as "very shocked" when she received the award. The 40-year-old has been working at the fastfood restaurant for four years now. This is also Fiden's third job, and her first time receiving an Employee of the Year award.

Fiden believes that coming to work every day, working your hardest, and helping others is what it takes to become employee of the year. "Compared to my previous jobs, McDonald's is very unique and I feel I've enjoyed my time working here more."

Rinie Fiden NEIL FAMA

And like Barro, Fiden also believes that, because she enjoys the job, it makes her do an even better job. "I'm very thankful to my coworkers for always being very helpful. We all help each other," said Fiden

According to Ana Olaes, McDonald's Saipan Human Resources manager, all the managers vote for Employee of the Year. Everyone gives their input and rate each employee's performance based on meeting or exceeding expectations. The managers' vote would be then forwarded to the HR Office, where the ratings and scores are validated based on the employees records.

The employees that are eligible for Employee of the Year must have been chosen as one of the Employees of the Quarter. Two employees of the year are chosen every year, one from each store.

Employees of the Year receive a certificate of recognition, a special gift and cash reward, and others.

"These are the types of people we are looking for. They're not working because they wanted to win an award. They are really working hard because it is what is needed to do. This is important because we want to provide to our customers what we promise," said Olaes.

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By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

McDonald's
celebrates 28th anniversary in the CNMI

VOXPOPULI

Torres

"Congratulations to the Ayuyu family. They are business partners of the CNMI in helping our economy grow because of the employment that they provide and also bringing good food here to Saipan. McDonald's never fails to keep children and families happy through contributions, community outreach and many more."

—Gov. Ralph DLG Torres

Santos

"I remember back in the '90s when there was a line all the way down to Chalan Lau Lau and Chalan Monsignor Guerrero. It goes to show how happy the community was to have McDonald's here [on] Saipan. I want to send my congratulations to the Ayuyu family for running a very successful franchise and I wish them all the best!"

—Jay Santos, general manager, Triple J Five Star Wholesale Foods

Roque

"Congratulations on your 28th year anniversary and more power!"

— Rachel M. Roque, property manager, Triple J Saipan Inc. Real Estate Division

"On behalf of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce, I congratulate McDonald's of Saipan on their 28th anniversary. We are all grateful for the Ayuyu family's many contributions to our community. They have employed hundreds of our local residents over the past 28 years and continue to train many of our young adults on good work ethics, food preparation processes, and great customer service. Biba McDonald's!"

Guerrero

—Joe Guerrero, president, Saipan Chamber of Commerce

Sword

"The Ayuyu family is deeply rooted in this community. To start McDonald's, they actually mortgaged their house and from there, it has grown to what it is today after 28 years. They had a dream, a goal, believed in it, and acted on it, which should be a template for other entrepreneurs to do and follow. Look at how you can get into business and how make it work. Congratulations to McDonald's and to the Ayuyu family"

—Gary Sword, member, Governor's Council of Economic Advisers

Kim-Tenorio

"Congratulations to the Ayuyu family. McDonald's is known not just for providing meals to the community but also for jobs that contribute to our economy, which is great."

—Associate Judge Teresa Kim-Tenorio

Villanueva

"It's always a pleasure to see locally owned businesses invest in the community by bringing in large franchises and growing them. Congratulations, McDonald's and the Ayuyu family and we look forward to another 28 years of continued success on Saipan and Guam."

—Shayne Villanueva, AON Insurance

Blanco

"Congratulations Joe, Marcia and the rest of the family and the McDonald's team on your 28th anniversary!"

—Rep. Ivan A. Blanco

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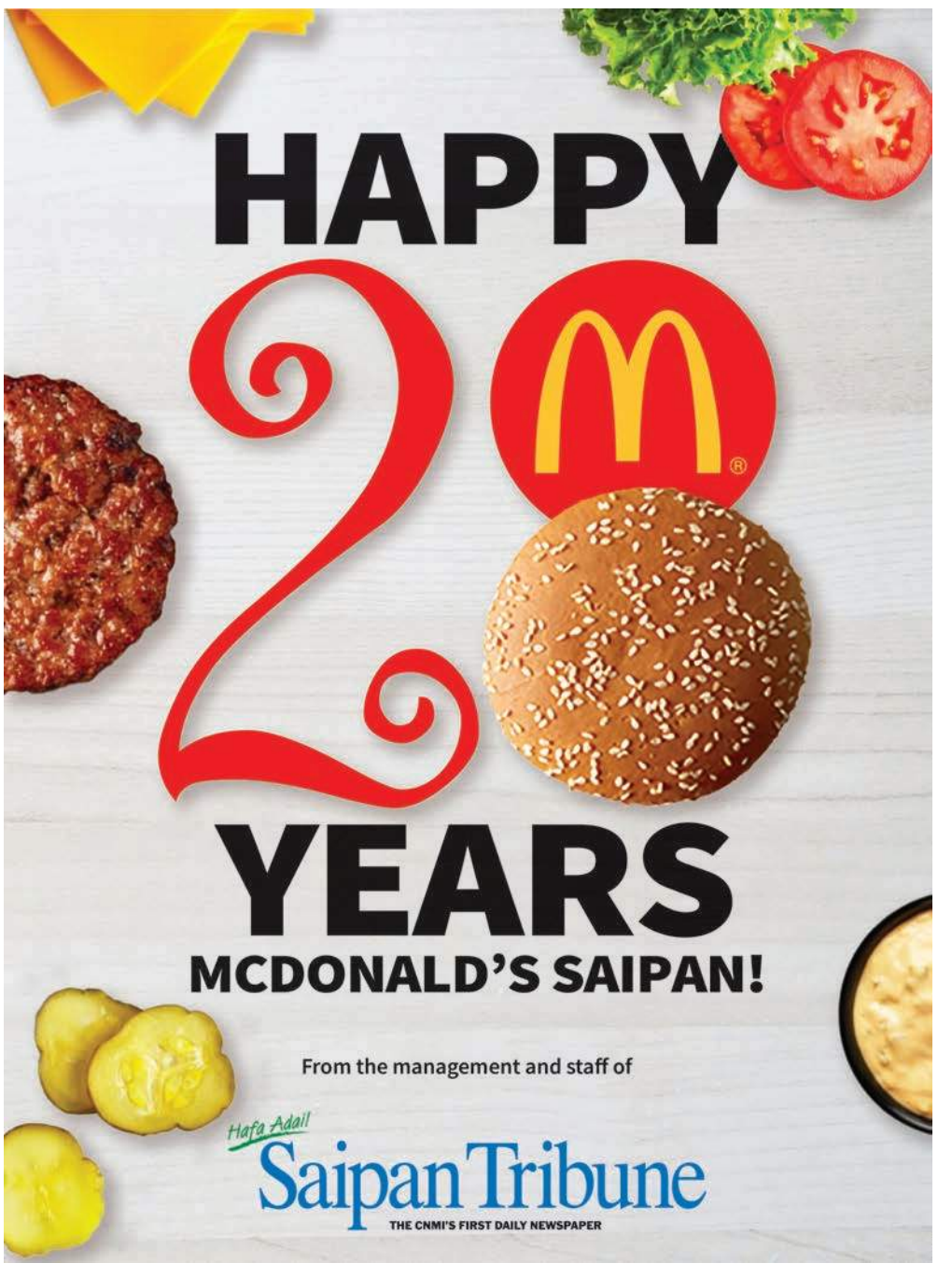

Business

BOG announces closure for enterprise-wide training

HAGATNA, Guam— Bank of Guam announces the following closures throughout its network:

- San Francisco: Closed March 16, 2021, reopens March 17, 2021
- Guam: Closed March 17, 2021, Reopens March 18, 2021
- Neighboring Islands: Closed March 18, 2021, Reopens March 19, 2021

For more information, please contact Jackie Marati at jackie.marati@bankofguam.com. ***(PR)***

Go natural with Candle J Saipan

By BEA CABRERA
beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Did you know you that you can help save the environment while lighting a scented candle? The answer is in the affirmative when the candle is made of natural soy that carries no toxins, carcinogens, or pollutants unlike petroleum-based paraffin candles. Candle J Saipan makes quality scented soy candles with premium fragrance oils and natural soy wax.

Established in February last year, Matt and Jiah Iguel are the owners of Candle J and the husband-and-wife team said that since there is no place on Saipan that sells scented natural soy wax candles, they decided to make their own.

"We started making candles as a hobby and became passionate about it. So, we made a decision in opening a candle business which is now Candle J.…Our candles are 100% natural soy which means that they are both non-toxic and healthy… We use USA-qualified, non-toxic ingredients to ensure our customers; wellness and joy," Matt said.

"Our business is home-based in Kagman. We try to accommodate our customers at their convenience as much as possible. We often deliver the candles directly to the customers. We have frequent inquiries through social media messenger and we make an appointment for further discussion in case of giveaways or a large number of orders," Matt added.

Personally, both couples are into fragrances or scented candles and they wanted to share to the community different kinds of scents and enjoy them. "Candles have more power than just lighting the place. It can take away unpleasant smells such as cooking smells, pet odor, moldy smell, or sweat odor. Also, it can be a great addition to the house, office, and any event to bring a warm and relaxing mood. If you get a headache from strong scented candles and you would like to enjoy the subtle scents around you, soy candles are ideal for you," Jiah said.

"Since customers can choose the scent that fits the theme of the mood, event, or matches the person they are giving the gift to, handmade candles can bring great meaning to any event or relationship. Also, by purchasing candles that are made with natural ingredients, you are taking care of your health and the wellness of your loved ones… since we opened, we are actively learning and improving the business," Jiah added.

Candle J Saipan has a kiosk in the Sabalu Market at the Garapan Fishing Base. For more information, call 789-7451 or send them a message through Facebook or Instagram @ candlejsaipan and email: candlej670@gmail.com.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
A vial of Candle J Saipan products are available at the Sabalu Market at the Garapan Fishing Base or online through Facebook or Instagram.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Candle J Saipan started as a hobby and is now a business.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 21-027

Opening Date: March 05, 2021
Closing Date: March 25, 2021

POSITION TITLE:	**Trades Technician-Electrician**
DEPARTMENT:	**Power Generation**
LOCATION:	**Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA**
ANNUAL SALARY:	**$21, 902.40 to $28, 115.00 per annum, Non- Exempt**
CONTRACT:	**Not Contracted**
POSITION(S):	**Four (4)**

The incumbent will be under the overall supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee. This class specification represents only the core areas of responsibilities; specific position assignments will vary depending on the needs of Power Generation. Primary duties as a TRADES TECHNICIAN: ELECTRICIAN for a diesel engine power plant.

Duties:

- Performs maintenance, operations, installations, troubleshooting and/or repairs of Generator, switchgears and engine control panels of various brands/make/model, Motor Control Center, Transformer, Protection relays and overhead crane
- Read and interpret electrical diagrams and codes. USA standards, Japanese standards, European standards, & NEC (National Electrical Code).
- Knowledge in AC / DC system, Single and three phase system, Lighting and outlets, Paging System, Fire Alarm, & Battery Bank.
- Familiarize with the usage of various electrical test equipment; Multimeter tester, Insulation resistance tester, Transformer tester, Ground resistance tester, & Hydrometer.
- Familiarize with the usage of various electrical tools Crimper, Pipe bender, Hydraulic knock out puncher, Pipe threader, Micrometer, & Vernier caliper.
- Familiarize with the usage of various power and pneumatic tools Portable drill, Grinder, & Impact wrench.
- Operates specialized and heavy equipment. Emergency generator, Forklift, & Overhead crane.
- Attend to Trouble calls after normal working hours.
- Maintains of daily reports. Practices SAFETY. Cleans, organizes

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma, General Education Diploma, or Adult Basic Education. Graduate from a Vocational/Technical Institution as an Electrician or related field. Must demonstrate having had: 4 years of increasingly responsible experience in a diesel engine power plant. 4 years of increasingly responsible experience in performing electrical duties.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Mechanical and electrical principles, practices and operations of power plant equipment. Customer service principles; Mathematical concepts; Inventory maintenance practices; Taking equipment readings and maintaining reading data; Inspection procedures; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Performing inspections and analyzing system and equipment data; Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standard operating procedures; Monitoring plant equipment and making adjustments; Identifying electrical and mechanical issues and recommending or implementing solutions; Initiating requests and trouble calls and providing assistance; Preparing and updating activity logs and status reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work; exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends, holidays and on-call.

Applicants may be tested. Subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: You may submit your CUC Employment Application and/or resume at the Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday, 7:30am – 4:30pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota can drop it off at the Tinian and Rota Administration office. Application and resume can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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- Call the Guam Benefits Office and leave a message:(671) 489-3793

Include the following:
- Your email and phone number
- First and Last Name
- Reason for Contact

(For security reasons, DO NOT include your social security number in the email/phone call)

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A Benefits Counselor will contact you within 2-hours of leaving a message.

If your message is received after 2:30pm, or on a holiday, or on a weekend, you will be notified the next business day of your scheduled interview date/time.

In all cases, a confirmation telephone call or email will be sent to the customer.

Appointment Days/Times: Monday through Friday, 8am to 3:30pm

Benefits Counselors will be available to address Non-Health Care related inquiries related to Compensation, Pension, Survivor Benefits, Claims, Appeals, Status Requests, Etc. and assistance with the claim process.

VA | U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs

Nation

Georgia massage parlor shootings leave 8 dead; man captured

ATLANTA (AP)—Shootings at two massage parlors in Atlanta and one in the suburbs Tuesday evening left eight people dead, many of them women of Asian descent, authorities said. A 21-year-old man suspected in the shootings was taken into custody in southwest Georgia hours later after a manhunt, police said.

The attacks began around 5 p.m., when five people were shot at Youngs Asian Massage Parlor in a strip mall near a rural area in Acworth, about 30 miles (50 kilometers) north of Atlanta, Cherokee County Sheriff's Office spokesman Capt. Jay Baker said. Two people died at the scene and three were transported to a hospital where two of them also died, Baker said.

No one was arrested at the scene.

Around 5:50 p.m., police in the Buckhead neighborhood of Atlanta, responding to a call of a robbery in progress, found three women dead from apparent gunshot wounds at Gold Spa. While they were at that scene, they learned of a call reporting shots fired at another spa across the street, Aromatherapy Spa, and found a woman who appeared to have been shot dead inside the business.

"It appears that they may be Asian," Atlanta Police Chief Rodney Bryant said.

The killings came amid a recent wave of attacks against Asian Americans that coincided with the spread of the coronavirus across the United States.

"Our entire family is praying for the victims of these horrific acts of violence," Gov. Brian Kemp said Tuesday evening on Twitter.

A man suspected in the Acworth shooting was captured by surveillance video pulling up to the business around 4:50 p.m. Tuesday, minutes before the attack, authorities said. Baker said the suspect, Robert Aaron Long, of Woodstock, was taken into custody in Crisp County, about 150 miles (240 kilometers) south of Atlanta.

Baker said they believe Long is also the suspect in the Atlanta shootings.

Police said video footage showed the suspect's vehicle in the area of the Atlanta spas about the time of those attacks as well. That, as well as other video evidence, "suggests it is extremely likely our suspect is the same as Cherokee County's, who is in custody," Atlanta police said in a statement. Atlanta and Cherokee County authorities were working to confirm the cases are related.

FBI spokesman Kevin Rowson said the agency was assisting Atlanta and Cherokee County authorities in the investigation.

Crisp County Sheriff Billy Hancock said in a video posted on Facebook that his deputies and state troopers were notified around 8 p.m. that a murder suspect out of north Georgia was headed toward their county. Deputies and troopers set up along the interstate and "made contact with the suspect," who was driving a 2007 black Hyundai Tucson, around 8:30 p.m., he said.

A state trooper performed a PIT, or pursuit intervention technique, maneuver, "which caused the vehicle to spin out of control," Hancock said. Long was then taken into custody "without incident" and was being held in the Crisp County jail for Cherokee County authorities who were expected to arrive soon to continue their investigation.

Due to the shootings, Atlanta police said they dispatched officers to check nearby similar businesses and increased patrols in the area.

Battle over Floyd's 2019 arrest highlights key trial issue

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A lawyer for the former Minneapolis police officer who pressed his knee against George Floyd's neck wants to bring up Floyd's history of drug use and a previous arrest in an effort to show jurors that Floyd was partly to blame for his own death.

A prosecutor says it's irrelevant and that Derek Chauvin's lawyer is trying to smear Floyd to excuse his client's actions. Chauvin is charged with murder and manslaughter.

Now it's up to Hennepin County Judge Peter Cahill to decide the critical question of how much the high-profile trial will revolve around Floyd's own actions on May 25, when the Black man was declared dead after Chauvin, who is white, pressed his knee against his neck for about nine minutes. Floyd's death, captured on a widely seen bystander video, set off weeks of sometimes-violent protests across the country and led to a national reckoning on racial justice.

The judge previously rejected Chauvin's attempt to tell the jury about Floyd's May 2019 arrest—a year before his fatal encounter with Chauvin—but heard fresh arguments Tuesday from both sides. He said he would rule on the request Thursday.

Defense attorney Eric Nelson argued that new evidence makes the earlier arrest admissible: Drugs were found last December during a second search of the car Floyd was in, and were found in a January search of the squad car into which the four officers attempted to put Floyd.

He also argued the similarities between the encounters are relevant: Both times, as officers drew their guns and struggled to get Floyd out of the car, he called out for his mother, claimed he had been shot before and cried, and put what appeared to be pills in his mouth. Both searches turned up drugs in the cars. Officers noticed a white residue outside his mouth both times, although that has not been explained.

In the first arrest, several opioid pills and cocaine were found. An autopsy showed Floyd had fentanyl and methamphetamine in his system when he died.

"The similarities are incredible. The exact same behavior in two incidents, almost one year apart," Nelson said.

Paramedics who examined Floyd in 2019 warned him that his blood pressure was dangerously high, putting him at risk for a heart attack or stroke, and took him to a hospital for examination. Nelson argued that shows Floyd knew that swallowing drugs might result in going to the hospital rather than jail.

Biden: Cuomo should resign if investigation confirms claims

NEW YORK (AP)—The pressure against New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo over sexual harassment allegations reached the White House on Tuesday, with President Joe Biden saying Cuomo should resign if the state attorney general's investigation confirms the claims against him.

Biden made the remarks in an interview with ABC News that is scheduled to air Wednesday. When asked by anchor George Stephanopoulos whether Cuomo should resign if the investigation confirms the women's claims, Biden said "yes" and added, "I think he'd probably end up being prosecuted, too."

"It takes a lot of courage to come forward so the presumption is it should be taken seriously," Biden said. "And it should be investigated, and that's what's underway now."

Cuomo is facing allegations that he sexually harassed or behaved inappropriately toward multiple women, including several former staffers. The former staffers have accused Cuomo of workplace harassment, including demeaning them with pet nicknames or making objectifying remarks about their appearance, subjecting them to unwanted kisses and touches or asking them about their sex lives.

Cuomo also faces an allegation that he groped a female staff member under her shirt after summoning her to the governor's mansion in Albany late last year. He has denied touching any women inappropriately.

The first woman to publicly speak out against Cuomo, Lindsey Boylan, said the governor kissed her on the lips without consent and "would go out of his way to touch me on my lower back, arms and legs."

The New York Times reported Tuesday when Boylan initially accused the governor of harassment in December, some of Cuomo's aides and allies drafted an open letter attacking her as part of a campaign to undermine her credibility.

The Times, speaking to three people with direct knowledge, said the letter accused Boylan of being politically motived. One of the people told the Times that Cuomo had been involved in drafting it.

The letter ultimately wasn't released.

A query was sent to Cuomo's office asking about the Times' report, as well as Biden's comments.

The three-term governor has rejected calls for his resignation from fellow Democrats, including New York's two U.S. senators, Chuck Schumer and Kirsten Gillibrand, and has asked New Yorkers to await the results of an investigation headed by state Attorney General Letitia James.

CNMI DIVISION OF PROCUREMENT SERVICES
CNMI GOVERNMENT

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS
RFP NO.: RFP21-MHC-052

SUBMISSION DATE: APRIL 12, 2021 • TIME: 09:30 A.M.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, MHC

/S/ FRANCISCO C. AGUON
ACTING DIRECTOR, PS

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID
ITB21-CHCC/FACILITY-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: APRIL 19th, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

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DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
Commonwealth Healthcare Corporation

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/AOC-COVID-19-002

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 22, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

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CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & S UPPLY

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY
COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL
RFP21-CHCC/AOC-COVID-19-001

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: MARCH 20, 2021 TIME:10:00AM (CHST)

"CHCC VACCINATION CALL CENTER"

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/S/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/S/ CORAZON P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

Asia

AFTER PEACEFUL PROTESTS IN MYANMAR

Deadly violence resumes

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—At least two people protesting last month's military coup were reported shot and killed by Myanmar security forces Tuesday after a morning of peaceful marches.

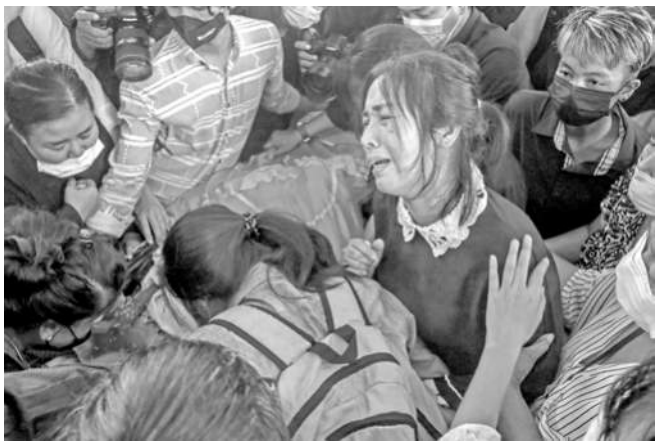
Security forces have killed scores of their countrymen in recent days, and the U.N. has put the death toll at 149 since the Feb. 1 coup that toppled Aung San Suu Kyi's elected government.

The independent Assistance Association for Political Prisoners said 183 people have been killed since the coup.

Violence was reported Tuesday in the biggest city, Yangon, where casualties have been the highest. Police fired rubber bullets in several neighborhoods, and one man was reported killed. Another killing was reported in Kawlin city in the northwestern Sagaing Region.

U.N. Human Rights Office spokesperson, Ravina Shamdasani, said at least 11 people were killed Monday, adding to 57 deaths over the weekend. While there were many more reports of killings, it was unable to corroborate them.

"The killing of demonstrators, arbitrary arrests and the reported torture of prisoners violate fundamental human rights and stand in clear defiance of calls by the Security Council for restraint, dialogue and a return to Myanmar's democratic path," said U.N. Secretary-General António Guterres.



AP

Mother of Khant Ngar Hein weeps during his funeral in Yangon, Myanmar Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

The coup reversed years of slow progress toward democracy in Myanmar, which for five decades had languished under strict military rule that led to international isolation and sanctions.

Protesters have recently used tactics meant to avoid violent confrontations. On Tuesday, social media reports said candlelight marches before sunrise were held in Mawlamyaing in Mon State in southeastern Myanmar.

Another tactic has been to use signboards as proxies for human protesters, placing them in rows in public places. This tactic was reported to have been used by a group of engineers in the second-biggest city, Mandalay, in central Myanmar.

More conventional peaceful protests of the sort that have been occurring daily were held without incident Tuesday in Monywa and Ye-U in central Myanmar, the city of Loikaw in the eastern state of Kayaw, and Kalaw in Southern Shan State, also in the east.

Complicating efforts to organize new protests as well as media coverage, cellphone internet service was cut Sunday night, although access was still available through fixed broadband connections.

Mobile data service had been used to stream live video coverage of protests, often showing security forces attacking demonstrators. It previously had been turned off only from 1 a.m. to 9 a.m. for several weeks, with no official explanation.

Japan, US criticize China in top Biden officials' first trip

TOKYO (AP)—Japan and the United States joined forces to criticize China's "coercion and aggression" in Asia as senior ministers from both countries held their first in-person talks since President Joe Biden took office in January.

Aside from the sharp rhetoric aimed at Beijing, the meeting Tuesday in Tokyo and a planned stop next in Seoul are as much an effort by the Biden administration to reassure worried allies in Asia after occasionally confrontational dealings with the Trump administration.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, after holding the so-called "two plus two" security talks with Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin and their Japanese counterparts — Foreign Minister Toshimitsu Motegi and Defense Minister Nobuo Kishi—said democracy and human rights are being challenged and the United States will push with its partners for a free and open Indo-Pacific.

Blinken said the Biden administration is committed to work with U.S. allies as they face challenges from China and its ally North Korea, which is pursuing an illicit nuclear weapons program.

"We will push back if necessary, when China uses coercion or aggression to get its way," he said.

In a joint statement released after the talks, the ministers shared strong worry over Beijing's human rights violations in Xinjiang, "unlawful maritime claims and activities in the South China Sea" and "unilateral action that seeks to change the status quo" over the Japan-controlled East China Sea islands that China also claims. The statement also stressed the importance of "peace and stability" in the Taiwan Strait.

On the Biden administration's first Cabinet-level trip abroad, Blinken and Austin also agreed with their Japanese counterparts to cooperate on the coronavirus pandemic and climate change, as well as the nuclear threat posed by North Korea and the situation in Myanmar after its military coup.

Earlier Tuesday, North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's powerful sister warned the U.S. to "refrain from causing a stink" if it wants to "sleep in peace" for the next four years. She also criticized the U.S. and South Korea for holding military exercises.

Kim Yo Jong's statement was North Korea's first comments directed at the Biden administration.

The White House noted the Cabinet secretaries' travel in the region and said its focus was partnering with allies on issues such as security in the region. "Our objective is always going to be focused on diplomacy and denuclearization of North Korea," press secretary Jen Psaki said.

World

DURING PANDEMIC

Brazil has 4th health chief

SAO PAULO (AP)—With COVID-19 still raging in Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro picked his fourth health minister since the pandemic began, this time the head of the country's cardiology society who in the past has spoken favorably of the country's conservative leader.

Marcelo Queiroga will replace Eduardo Pazuello, an active-duty army general with expertise in logistics who landed the position last May despite having no prior health experience.

Queiroga said in a press conference in capital Brasilia on Tuesday that the COVID-19 policy he will implement "is of the Bolsonaro administration, not of the health minister."

"I came to work for Brazil and other ministers of the Bolsonaro administration. The president is very worried about the situation," said Queiroga, who insisted he is against any lockdown measures. Some Brazilian cities are implementing restrictive shutdowns to halt the spread.

Pazuello had presided over the health ministry for the longest period of the three pandemic ministers before Queiroga. The revolving door reflects the challenges for the government of Latin America's largest nation to implement effective measures to control the virus' spread—or even agree which measures are necessary.

Queiroga has already called Bolsonaro "a great Brazilian." His social media channels have not made any criticism of the president's handling of the pandemic and pushed for a quick vaccine rollout.

João Gabbardo, a former secretary-executive of the health ministry, said on Twitter that Queiroga will face the worst figures of the pandemic in Brazil when he takes over.

"The record number of deaths today will be in a high scale. A suggestion; do not speak against a national lockdown," said Gabbardo, who now works for the Sao Paulo state government.

Tuesday night Brazil reported record 2,841 confirmed deaths by COVID-19 in the last 24 hours, which is 558 more than the previous all-time high established on Wednesday.

On Monday, Pazuello acknowledged in a press conference that Bolsonaro aimed to replace him. The first candidate for the job, cardiologist Ludhmila Hajjar, rejected it.

Pazuello's two predecessors left the position amid disagreements with Bolsonaro, who criticized broad social distancing and supported the use of an unproven anti-malarial drug to treat the disease. He continues to hold those positions, despite health experts' admonishments and studies showing the drug has no effect on COVID-19.

Pazuello proved more compliant. Immediately after taking the job, his ministry backed use and distribution of the malaria pill. On several occasions, he said that his boss tells him what to do, and he obeys.

Bolsonaro told supporters at the entrance of the presidential residence in Brasilia on Monday that there will be a transition period of up to two weeks with the outgoing and the incoming minister.

"Pazuello's work was well done in the management part. Now we are in a phase that is more aggressive in the fight against the virus," Brazil's president said.

Brazil has recorded almost 280,000 deaths from the virus, nearly all of which were on Pazuello's watch. The toll has been worsening lately, with the nation currently averaging more than 1,800 deaths each day. Health care systems of major cities are at the brink of collapse, and lawmakers allied with Bolsonaro have proposed suitable replacements for Pazuello, while threatening to step up pressure for an investigation into his handling of the crisis.

Canada lags in vaccinations but expects to catch up quickly

TORONTO (AP)—Canada once was hailed as a success story in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic, faring much better than the United States in deaths and infections because of how it approached lockdowns.

But the trade-dependent nation has lagged on vaccinating its population because it lacks the ability to manufacture the vaccine and has had to rely on the global supply chain for the lifesaving shots, like many other countries.

With no domestic supply, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau's government bet on seven different vaccines manufactured elsewhere and secured advance purchase agreements—enough to get 10 doses for each of Canada's 38 million people. Regulators have approved the Pfizer, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson vaccines. While acquiring them has proven difficult, that gamble appears to be about to pay off.

Although Canada's economy is tightly interconnected with the U.S., Washington hasn't allowed the hundreds of millions of vaccine doses made in America to be exported, and Canada has had to turn to Europe and Asia.

"Our best friend and neighbor, the United States, has a Pfizer vaccine plant in Kalamazoo, Michigan. I can shoot a puck from Kalamazoo and hit Ontario, yet we're not getting our Pfizer vaccine from them," said Dr. Isaac Bogoch, an infectious disease scientist at the University of Toronto.

The vaccine supply chain difficulties have forced Canada to extend the time between the first shot and the second by up to four months so that everyone can be protected faster with the primary dose. The hope is to get all adults at least one shot by the end of June.

"It's not just Canada that is experiencing turbulence. The entire globe is undertaking the largest mass vaccination campaign in its history with completely new supply chains," Procurement Minister Anita Anand said in an interview with The Associated Press.

According to the World Health Organization, nearly 80% of the vaccines manufactured so far have been administered in only 10 countries.

Canada ranks about 22nd in the number of doses administered, with about 8% of the population getting at least one shot. That compares with 36% in the U.K, 21% in the U.S. and 8%. in the EU. Chile, which like many countries has turned to China, has vaccinated 25% with at least one dose.

The "insatiable global demand" for vaccines has forced the competition against bigger economies like the EU, the U.K. and the U.S., Bogoch said, "and on top of that you are also competing in an environment where there's protectionist laws."

Life & Style

Venezuelan teen sells drawings on Twitter to buy food

BARQUISIMETO, Venezuela (AP)—Samuel Andrés Mendoza carefully chooses from dozens of colored pencils spread out on his kitchen table, humming a reggaeton song as he deftly applies contrast to the Dragon Ball anime character taking shape on his sketch pad.

It is not just a pastime anymore for the 14-year-old. Without his mother's knowledge, he began selling his drawings on his Twitter page to help the family get by and to pay for a special diet doctors say he needs in Venezuela's troubled economy.

"Hi. I'm Samuel, I'm selling my drawings for $1 to help my mom with my diet, buy her a house and a shop so she won't work on the street and get sick with COVID-19 and buy peanut butter for me. Thank you, sir and madam," he tweeted along with photos of four drawings.

It caught the eye of many and he now has more than 15,000 followers, selling dozens of drawings he has worked up at a table between a worn-out couch and a rusting refrigerator in the small family home in Barquisimeto, about five hours west of Venezuela's capital, Caracas.

"The truth is I did not know that I was going to draw like that, but time has passed, and I have managed to paint for real," Samuel said this month, showing his finished drawing of Dragon Ball's Goku. "And here it is."

In a crisis-wracked country where workers earn an average of $2 per month, his sales can make a big difference for a family budget strained by his need for high-protein foods to deal with a form of malnutrition.

AP

Samuel Andres Mendoza looks at a picture of a Pokemon on his computer before drawing it, at his home in Barquisimeto, Venezuela, Tuesday, March 2, 2021.

Like millions of other Venezuelans, Samuel and his mother, Magdalena Rodríguez, emigrated in search of better conditions. They went to Colombia in 2019 when widespread power outages hit her homeland just as she learned of her son's diagnosis.

But they came home in December after she lost her job and found increasing prejudice against the growing number of Venezuelan migrants.

The mother of three now sells snacks from a table in Barquisimeto's main plaza. She also found work as a cleaner. Still, it has been difficult to afford the relatively expensive high-protein foods needed by her son, who also has a diagnosis of Asperger syndrome, a broad branch of the autism spectrum.

"It's not easy," Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez, 38, discovered Samuel's effort when he asked for her bank account information so that people could pay for his work.

Samuel, who said he began drawing at age 5, has an inclination for anime characters, but has also portrayed soccer superstar Cristiano Ronaldo and the animated SpongeBob SquarePants.

Venezuelan artist Oscar Olivares, who runs an art academy, saw Samuel's tweets and gave him a scholarship to study drawing. Social media followers have also gifted him a laptop, a set of artists' pencils—and peanut butter, a good source of protein.

Samuel, who said he may raise his prices as his skills advance, would like to make YouTube-style videos about videogames when he grows up.

"I'm proud of him, really. I don't have words," Rodríguez said. "But I do feel angry sometimes, I feel helpless, because I think that at his age, he should be studying, learning, and not wanting to work to help me, when I'm the one who has to do everything possible to give them comfort and nourishment."

SHOWBIZ TIDBITS

Britain's Prince Philip returns home after treatment

LONDON (AP)—Britain's Prince Philip returned to Windsor Castle on Tuesday, following a month in the hospital during which he was treated for an infection and underwent a heart procedure. Philip, 99, the husband of Queen Elizabeth II, was admitted to the private King Edward VII's Hospital in London on Feb. 16, where he was treated for an infection. He was later transferred to a specialized cardiac care unit at St. Bartholomew's Hospital, before returning to King Edward VII's. Photographers standing outside the door of the private hospital captured his departure in the back of a black car. Buckingham Palace later issued a statement confirming Philip's release.

CBS says 'The Talk' staying off air after racism talk

NEW YORK (AP)—CBS says its daytime show "The Talk" will stay on hiatus for another week after a discussion about racism involving co-host Sharon Osbourne went off the rails last week. The network said in a statement that it is committed to "a process where all voices are heard, claims are investigated and appropriate action is taken where necessary." Osbourne reacted angrily last week during a discussion about British television personality Piers Morgan, who she describes as a friend. Morgan left the "Good Morning Britain" show after he said he didn't believe Meghan, the Duchess of Sussex, when she said in an interview that she had considered suicide when unhappy with her life in Britain's royal family. A fellow host, Sheryl Underwood, said to Osbourne on the show last Wednesday, "what would you say to people who may feel that, while you're standing by your friend, it appears that you gave validation or safe haven to something that he has uttered that is racist, even if you don't agree?" Underwood, like Markle, is Black.

Michelle Obama aims to give a million meals in new campaign

Michelle Obama is launching a nonprofit campaign that aims to provide more than 1 million meals to food-insecure families in connection with the debut Tuesday of her children's food show on Netflix. The "Pass the Love w/ Waffles + Mochi" initiative, named after the new series "Waffles + Mochi," is a collaborative campaign by the nonprofit Partnership for a Healthier America, its honorary chair Obama and Higher Ground Productions, the production company owned by the former first lady and her husband, former President Barack Obama. The nonprofit says the campaign was inspired by the series, which tells the story of two puppet friends who "travel the world exploring the wonders of food and culture while learning how to cook with fresh ingredients." ***(AP)***

Pritzker Architecture Prize awarded to Paris-based duo

The Pritzker Architecture Prize, the field's highest honor, has been awarded to the Paris-based duo of Anne Lacaton and Jean-Philippe Vassal for "prioritizing the enrichment of human life," especially in the context of public housing. The selection of the French laureates, who have long focused on creating more liveable structures that connect to nature in even the densest of urban settings, was announced Tuesday by Tom Pritzker, chairman of The Hyatt Foundation, which sponsors the award. "Through their design of private and social housing, cultural and academic institutions, public spaces, and urban developments, Lacaton and Vassal re-examine sustainability in their reverence for pre-existing structures, conceiving projects by first taking inventory of what already exists," organizers said in a statement. "By prioritizing the enrichment of human life ... they are able to benefit the individual socially, ecologically and economically, aiding the evolution of a city." ***(AP)***

Couple's future is threatened by fiancee's grief, depression

DEAR ABBY: My fiancee and I have been together for four years. I have lost A LOT of people in my life, so I am used to death. She, on the other hand, didn't experience it until two years ago, when she lost her grandfather. The next year, her mother passed, and last year we lost a child—her oldest—my stepson.

Abby, she is so lost. She's no longer the same person she once was, and I totally understand that. I'm sad and depressed, too, but she's bad.

I love this woman like I have never loved any other. I can't picture life without her, but lately I have begun to wonder how it would affect me, her and the kids if I left. I'm not equipped to deal with someone else's depression on top of my own. I have been trying, but I'm finding myself getting more and more angry. What should I do?

TORN IN THE EAST

DEAR TORN: You mentioned that you, too, suffer from depression. Are you receiving treatment for it? If you are seeing a psychologist (and being medicated), discuss this with the person who is working with you. You may need a change in your medication.

It isn't surprising that with so much loss all at once in her life, your fiancee is grieving and depressed. Frankly, while I might suggest she join a support group for help in coping with the loss of her child, she may also need help from a licensed mental health professional.

Although you are tempted, I don't think now is the time to abandon your fiancee and her children. Once she is stabilized, you may not want to leave at all.

DEAR ABBY: My 13-, almost 14-year-old daughter, "Gabbi," is a shining star of responsibility and being self-driven. She also likes nice things.

Gabbi has been babysitting for my sister for several months and has saved almost every penny, which amounts to hundreds of dollars. I'm proud of her discipline. However, I think she should start buying some of her "frivolous wants" herself.

I'm willing to buy her and my other children gifts when I can and on special occasions on my single income, but Gabbi often asks me for $10 here and $10 there. Because it's more than I can afford, I have to say no and see her silent disappointment. I know the simple answer is to not give in, but I want my daughter to learn that it's OK to spend a little on herself here and there. I'm not sure what words to use to convince her. Can you help?

MOM ON A BUDGET

DEAR MOM: Your daughter is old enough for an honest conversation with her mom. Start by telling her how proud of her you are that she has shown how disciplined and responsible she is because those traits will serve her well in years to come.

Tell her you feel bad about disappointing her when you refuse her requests, but now that she's nearly 14, she's mature enough to understand you are the sole wage earner, money is tight and her frequent requests put a strain on the budget. Then point out that she has saved quite a bit of income from her babysitting, and she should direct some of it toward the items she's asking you for.

What teens need to know about sex, drugs, AIDS and getting along with peers and parents is in "What Every Teen Should Know." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for $8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Teen Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

DEAR ABBY

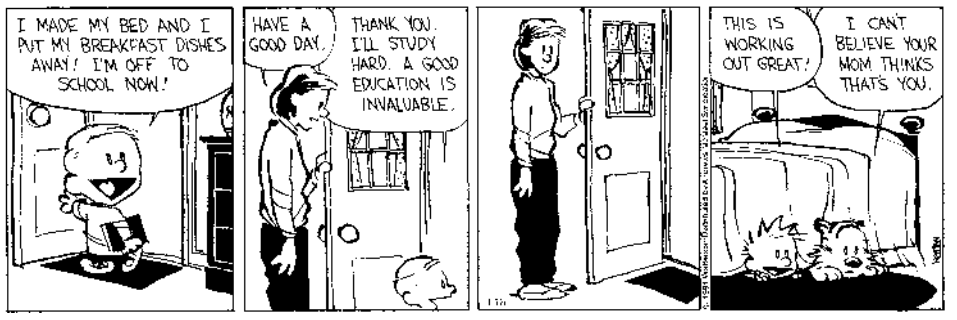
By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


I MADE MY BED AND I PUT MY BREAKFAST DISHES AWAY! I'M OFF TO SCHOOL NOW!
HAVE A GOOD DAY.
THANK YOU. I'LL STUDY HARD. A GOOD EDUCATION IS INVALUABLE.
THIS IS WORKING OUT GREAT!
I CAN'T BELIEVE YOUR MOM THINKS THAT'S YOU.

Garfield®

By Jim Davis

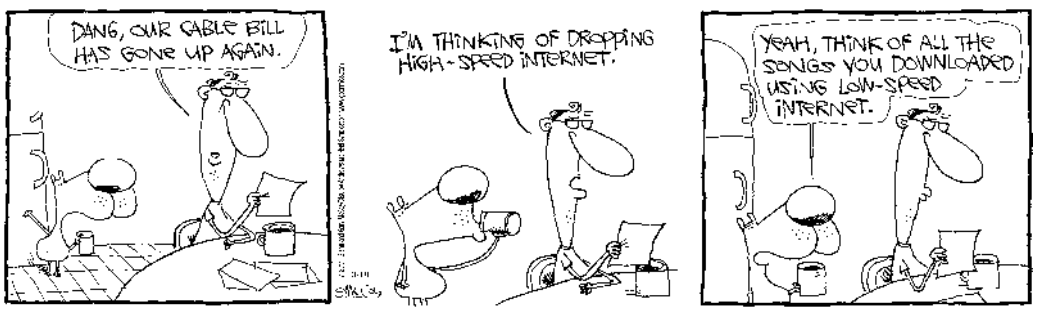
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

OKAY, SON. I GOT YOU THE VR GAME "HYPEREXTENDED KNEE."
BUT I THINK I SHOULD TRY IT OUT FIRST, IN CASE IT'S TOO INTENSE.
OKAY?
SON?
YOU'RE TALKING TO THE FERN AGAIN, DAD.
3-18

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


DANG, OUR CABLE BILL HAS GONE UP AGAIN.
I'M THINKING OF DROPPING HIGH-SPEED INTERNET.
YEAH, THINK OF ALL THE SONGS YOU DOWNLOADED USING LOW-SPEED INTERNET.

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS

1 Low- — diet
5 Sharif of "Funny Girl"
9 Sweetie
12 Abbr. on a phone
13 "Arrivederci —"
14 Conceit
15 "A Farewell to Arms" author
17 Club —
18 Rust and the like
19 Leers at
21 — and behold
22 Mideast peninsula
24 Dull pain
27 June honoree
28 Comfy-cozy
31 Nemesis
32 "Strange Magic" gp.
33 "The Raven" monogram
34 Pyramid, maybe
36 Gore and Pacino
37 Former polit. divisions
38 State flower of Indiana
40 Old pronoun
41 Not fulfilled
43 Rose parts
47 King, in Cannes
48 Liam of "The Hunger Games"
51 NBC weekend show
52 Cupid's alias
53 Nullify
54 Fine, to NASA
55 Engrossed
56 Try out

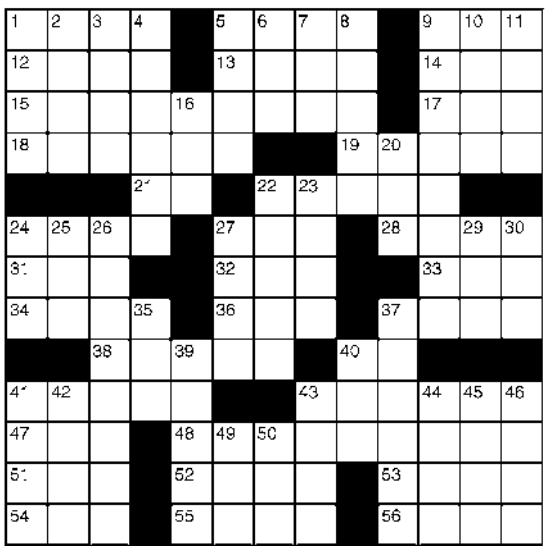
DOWN

1 Silver salmon
2 Pinnacle
3 Notes after "do"
4 Horse's headgear
5 PTA and NEA, e.g.
6 Trim the grass
7 Docs' bloc
8 Synthetic fabric
9 Fashion trends that rise and fall
10 Curved molding
11 Auction signals
16 "The Matrix" role
20 Tank filler
22 Charlie Brown's sister
23 Altar vows
24 Toward the stern
25 Bill's partner
26 Plant-based drink
27 Campus bigwig
29 Eg. and Syr., once
30 Family docs
35 Garden buzzer
37 Hit the road
39 Different
40 Evergreen type
41 Celestial bear
42 Taboo
43 "Hey!"
44 "Rule, Britannia!" composer
45 Classic Fords
46 Attempt
49 Geological period
50 Swab the decks

Solution time: 24 mins.

R	E	E	F	■	A	L	B	■	S	P	A	M
A	R	T	E	■	E	A	U	■	T	A	C	O
P	A	T	T	E	R	N	S	■	I	T	T	O
S	T	U	C	C	O	■	C	A	N	C	E	R
■	■	■	H	T	S	■	I	U	S	H	■	■
I	M	P	■	O	O	F	■	F	E	F	D	S
R	O	A	T	■	I	A	P	■	R	T	F	S
M	O	T	E	T	■	A	L	E	■	T	O	N
■	■	R	A	R	A	■	A	R	F	■	■	■
S	L	■	C	E	S	■	S	T	E	E	L	E
C	O	C	O	■	P	A	T	E	N	T	E	D
A	R	■	Z	■	E	S	E	■	C	A	G	E
D	D	A	Y	■	N	P	R	■	E	T	O	N

Yesterday's answer 3-18



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Lily Collins, 32; Adam Levine, 42; Queen Latifah, 51; Vanessa Williams, 58.

Happy Birthday: Make the most out of every moment. Inspect what you have, and pass along what you don't need to someone who does. Pay it forward, and you'll clear a space in your heart and home for peace and tranquility. A rudimentary lifestyle will lead to mindfulness and the happiness you desire. Turn your focus to what matters to you, then proceed. Your numbers are 8, 17, 22, 38, 30, 43, 47.

ARIES *(March 21-April 19):* Take the initiative, and pick up the pace. Reach out to people who have something to offer that will help you reach your goal. Discipline and hard work will lead to an opportunity. Refuse to let emotional matters interfere with your progress. ✪✪✪

TAURUS *(April 20-May 20):* Make up your mind, and keep moving forward. Showing stability, confidence and goodwill will be necessary if you plan to get ahead. Making a premature move will end up slowing you down. Keep your thoughts and feelings to yourself. ✪✪✪

GEMINI *(May 21-June 20):* Gather knowledge, listen to experts and dismiss those who are pushy and uncompromising. Show your talents and ability, and an opportunity will come your way. Don't pass along information you have yet to verify. Facts, truth and integrity matter. ✪✪✪

CANCER *(June 21-July 22):* Do your own thing. Approach projects using your imagination and looking for new ways to utilize old ideas and concepts to fit trends. Invest time and money in self-improvement, education and personal growth. Romance is on the rise. ✪✪✪✪

LEO *(July 23-Aug. 22):* Take a moment to think matters through. Be sure it's accurate before you repeat what someone has said. An opportunity can turn sour quickly if you believe everything you hear or offer something you cannot deliver. Keep things in perspective, and control emotions. ✪✪

VIRGO *(Aug. 23-Sept. 22):* Address contractual, financial and legal matters calmly. If you try to use force, you'll meet opposition. Intelligence, knowledge and facts presented with diplomacy will encourage others to bend to your wishes. Self-improvement projects and romance are favored. ✪✪✪✪

LIBRA *(Sept. 23-Oct. 22):* Put everything in its place, prepare to bring about changes that will improve your money matters, and engage in activities that will encourage better health and fitness. Taking responsibility for your life and happiness will pay off. ✪✪✪✪

SCORPIO *(Oct. 23-Nov. 21):* An open mind will encourage talks that will help you micromanage your emotions and meaningful relationships. Looking at both sides of an issue will help you compromise and develop solutions that give you something in return. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS *(Nov. 22-Dec. 21):* Stay calm, regardless of what others say. Don't lose sight of what's authentic and meaningful to you. Observe more and speak less until you are sure of how you feel and what you want to do. Uncertainty requires time and patience. ✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN *(Dec. 22-Jan. 19):* A change looks promising. Watch things unfold, and you'll come up with a plan that will encourage you to update your surroundings to fit your lifestyle. A conversation with a friend or relative will trigger your desire to start something new. ✪✪✪✪✪

AQUARIUS *(Jan. 20-Feb. 18):* You aren't likely to see eye to eye with a friend, relative or co-worker. Emotions will surface, causing conversations to fester if you don't choose your words wisely. An abrupt change will upset your plans, putting you in an awkward position. ✪✪

PISCES *(Feb. 19-March 20):* Live and let live. Stay out of other people's business, and keep others from interfering in yours. Distance yourself from aggressive and unpredictable situations, and focus on the positive changes you can make to reach your goal. ✪✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are intelligent, resourceful and orderly. You are generous and kind.

✪: Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. ✪✪: You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. ✪✪✪: Focus and you'll reach your goals. ✪✪✪✪: Aim high; start new projects. ✪✪✪✪✪: Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

		7	6		2	4		
	1			4			8	
2	8			7			4	1
6	3			9			5	2
	9			8			2	
		1	5		4	6		

Difficulty Level ★★★ 3/18

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

4	3	9	5	7	2	1	6	8
8	7	1	4	6	9	3	2	5
5	6	2	8	3	1	9	7	4
7	1	8	2	4	3	6	5	9
2	4	5	9	1	6	8	3	7
3	9	6	7	8	5	2	4	1
1	2	4	3	9	7	5	8	6
9	5	7	6	2	8	4	1	3
6	8	3	1	5	4	7	9	2

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the **WONDERWORD.**

A GOOD SAMARITAN **Solution: 5 letters**

G	C	W	A	T	C	H	E	S	E	V	A	R	B	T
D	E	I	P	R	O	T	E	C	T	R	A	E	H	E
Y	E	N	T	N	R	E	N	M	L	H	U	M	A	N
S	S	T	E	S	K	E	S	K	W	A	R	M	R	D
E	E	S	A	R	I	I	E	L	G	A	Y	E	S	E
T	T	E	N	C	O	U	R	A	G	E	C	O	E	R
R	A	R	S	R	I	U	R	W	P	N	N	D	L	E
U	N	N	E	V	E	D	S	T	O	E	N	T	F	S
O	O	H	A	L	C	G	E	C	L	E	V	I	L	P
C	D	L	U	F	I	T	U	D	I	A	L	A	E	E
A	O	K	D	V	V	E	L	R	T	U	O	C	S	C
R	D	I	I	E	R	L	F	I	E	V	R	E	S	T
I	T	N	A	R	E	L	O	T	F	A	V	O	R	F
N	G	D	A	D	S	D	E	V	O	T	E	D	Y	U
G	R	O	B	H	G	I	E	N	E	L	B	O	N	L

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Altruistic, Brave, Caring, Concern, Conscience, Courtesy, Dedicated, Deed, Devoted, Donates, Dutiful, Encourage, Favor, Friend, Generous, Gentle, Giving, Hand, Heart, Heroism, Honest, Human, Kind, Life, Lift, Love, Loyal, Neighbor, Noble, Polite, Protect, Relief, Respectful, Save, Scout, Seek, Selfless, Serve, Service, Tender, Tolerant, Valor, Walk, Warm, Watches

Yesterday's Answer: Contractions

The NEW **Treasury 43** can be purchased online at www.WonderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

Lillard scores 50, Blazers rally past Pelicans, 125-124

PORTLAND, Ore. (AP)—Damian Lillard has led some memorable comebacks and made some clutch game-winners, but to him, this win was noteworthy.

Lillard had 50 points and 10 assists, and the Portland Trail Blazers came from behind to beat the New Orleans Pelicans 125-124 on Tuesday night.

Lillard, who finished with six 3-pointers, made a pair of free throws with 1.2 seconds left for Portland, which rallied from a 17-point deficit with some six minutes remaining. He scored 20 of his points in the final quarter.

"I think with how it happened and the position we were in down the stretch, this will be one I remember," Lillard said.

Brandon Ingram scored 30 points and Zion Williamson added 28 for the Pelicans. Lonzo Ball had 11 points and a season-high 17 assists.

Nickeil Alexander-Walker had 20 points, including six 3-pointers, off the bench for New Orleans. His 3 midway through the final quarter stretched the Pelicans' lead to 112-96.

But Gary Trent Jr.'s 3-pointer pulled the Blazers to within 117-113 with 3:30 left. Lillard added a 3 to make it a one-point game.

Eric Bledsoe answered with a 3 for New Orleans, but Carmelo Anthony's jumper kept it close. Williamson's layup made it 122-118 with just over a minute to go.

After Lillard and Williamson traded layups, Lillard was fouled and made both his shots. With 4.2 seconds left the Blazers got the ball with the Pelicans hanging on to a 124-123 lead.

AP

New Orleans Pelicans forward Brandon Ingram, left, shoots over Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard, bottom right, and forward Nassir Little during the first half of an NBA basketball game in Portland, Ore., Tuesday, March 16, 2021.

Bledsoe fouled Lillard, who made both his shots to put Portland up 125-124 with 1.2 seconds left. Williamson's turnaround hook at the other end at the buzzer missed the mark.

"I got to my spot and drew a foul and that was game," Lillard said.

The Pelicans were stunned.

"I mean, we just didn't play the way we played the whole game, like we were trying to run the clock out," Pelicans coach Stan Van Gundy said. "We talked about that before: We've got to get the ball down the floor and play the game. And we did not do it."

CJ McCollum, who was out with a fractured left foot, returned and finished with 10 points in 27 minutes for the Blazers. McCollum was averaging a career-best 26.7 points, as well as five assists, when he was injured during a game against the Atlanta Hawks on Jan. 16.

Hawks 119, Rockets 107

In Houston, Danilo Gallinari scored 20 of his 29 points in the first half and the Atlanta Hawks beat Houston 119-107 on Tuesday night, dealing the Rockets a franchise record-tying 17th straight loss.

Atlanta won its sixth straight, matching its longest since the first month of the 2016-17 season.

Houston's losing skid ties the the franchise record by the San Diego Rockets in the team's inaugural 1967-68 season. The Rockets haven't won since Feb. 4.

Atlanta led 73-58 at the half, but Houston won the third quarter 34-20 to pull within 93-92 entering the fourth.

The Hawks were without starting and backup centers Clint Capela (heel) and Onyeka Okongwu (adductor). Without their main two big men, the Hawks started power forwards Gallinari and John Collins.

Bulls 123, Thunder 102

In Chicago, Zach LaVine scored 40 points on 15-for-20 shooting, and the Chicago Bulls beat the Oklahoma City Thunder 123-102 on Tuesday night for their second straight win.

LaVine led the way as Chicago shot 51% (48 for 94) from the field. The All-Star guard was 7 for 12 from 3-point range in 31 minutes of playing time.

Shai Gilgeous-Alexander scored 21 points for Oklahoma City, which had won three of four. Moses Brown had 20 points and 16 rebounds, and Kenrich Williams scored 14.

76ers 99, Knicks 96

In Philadelphia, Tobias Harris scored the baskets that let the Philadelphia 76ers beat the New York Knicks for the 14th straight time and yelled, "I'm an All-Star!"

Fueled by a perceived snub, Harris has become a closer in the clutch and kept Philadelphia rolling without Joel Embiid.

Harris scored 30 points, Seth Curry had 20 and the 76ers beat the Knicks 99-96 on Tuesday night for their sixth straight win.

"That's for sure what I said," Harris said. "I'm just reaffirming that to myself. I know the fans know that. I just try and find motivation in different areas and that's one of them."

The Sixers (28-12) maintained their grip atop the Eastern Conference standings, in large part because Harris got hot in the final minutes. He scored seven straight points, including the tying bucket from 3-feet out and a go-ahead layup that made it 96-92.

Heat 113, Cavaliers 98

In Miami, the Miami Heat got another win, and for a change it came relatively easily.

Jimmy Butler had 28 points and 12 rebounds, Bam Adebayo returned from a knee issue and finished with 14 points, nine rebounds and six assists, and the Heat eased past the Cleveland Cavaliers 113-98 on Tuesday night.

Kelly Olynyk scored 17 points, Tyler Herro had 15 and Duncan Robinson added 14 for Miami, which won for the 11th time in its last 12 games. But this win was unlike most others for the Heat this season, in that it was only the third in which Miami held a double-digit lead for the entire fourth quarter.

Collin Sexton scored 21 for Cleveland, which got 16 points and eight rebounds from Ja-Vale McGee in 21 minutes on 8-for-10 shooting. It's been an up-and-down, mostly down, time of late for the Cavaliers — who lost 10 consecutive games, then won four in a row, and have gone 0-4 since.

Jazz 117, Celtics 109

In Boston, the Jazz already have the best record in the NBA. If they execute down the stretch like they did against the Celtics, they might be even better by season's end.

Donovan Mitchell had eight of his 21 points in the fourth quarter and Utah hit 19 3-pointers to beat Boston 117-109 on Tuesday night.

Jordan Clarkson added 20 points off the bench. Mike Conley scored 17 points and Rudy Gobert finished with 16 points and 12 rebounds to help the Jazz sweep the season series between the teams.

Boston led by as many as 11 in the first half before fading late.

Jayson Tatum led the Celtics with 29 points and Jaylen Brown added 28. But it wasn't enough to overcome a hot-shooting night by Utah, which also got 45 points from its bench.

Lakers 137, Timberwolves 121

In Los Angeles, LeBron James had 25 points, 12 rebounds and 12 assists in his 99th career triple-double, leading the Los Angeles Lakers to a 137-121 victory over the Minnesota Timberwolves on Tuesday night.

Montrezl Harrell scored 25 points in another big game for the defending NBA champions, who picked up their third straight victory on the second night of a back-to-back set. James also recorded a triple-double Monday night at Golden State while Harrell scored 27 points.

Karl-Anthony Towns and Anthony Edwards scored 29 points apiece for the Timberwolves, who had won two of their last three games for the first time since December.

Tiger Woods returns to Florida to recover from car crash

By DOUG FERGUSON
AP GOLF WRITER

Tiger Woods is back at home in Florida to resume his recovery from career-threatening leg injuries he suffered when his SUV ran off a road and down a hill in the Los Angeles suburbs last month.

"Happy to report that I am back home and continuing my recovery," Woods said in a tweet posted Tuesday night. "I am so grateful for the outpouring of support and encouragement that I have received over the past few weeks."

Woods was injured Feb. 23, two days after the Genesis Invitational at Riviera. He was on his way to a television shoot for GolfTV a little after 7 a.m. when his SUV crashed into a median, rolled over and ended up on its side near a steep road known for wrecks, authorities aid. He had to be pulled out through the windshield.

He had a lengthy surgery that day at Harbor-UCLA Medical Center for shattered tibia and fibula bones of his lower right leg in multiple locations. Those were stabilized with a rod in his tibia. Additional injuries to the bones in his foot and ankle required screws and pins.

AP

In this Oct. 28, 2019, file photo, Tiger Woods smiles during the winner's ceremony after winning the Zozo Championship PGA Tour at the Accordia Golf Narashino country club in Inzai, east of Tokyo, Japan.

He was transferred to Cedars-Sinai Medical Center for follow-up procedures.

Woods thanked the medical staff at both hospitals for taking care of him.

"I will be recovering at home and working on getting stronger every day," Woods said in the statement.

A dozen or so players at the Workday Championship in Florida wore black trousers and red shirts—the Sunday colors of Woods for his record-tying 82 victories on the PGA Tour—in the final round.

Woods has stayed in touch through text messages, sending them to Bryson DeChambeau ahead of his Bay Hill victory and to Justin Thomas, one of his closest friends in golf, ahead of his victory in The Players Championship on Sunday.

Rory McIlroy suggested in an interview with Jimmy Fallon that Woods might be headed home to Florida.

"He's doing better," McIlroy said. "I think all the guys have reached out to him. Hopefully if things go well over the next week or so, he might be able to get home and start recovery at home, which would be great for him. See his kids, see his family.

"But yeah, he's doing better. And I think all of us are wishing him a speedy recovery at this point."

McIlroy and Thomas are among those who live near Woods in Jupiter, Florida.

17th Annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby on April 10

The Saipan Fishermen's Association will hold the 17th Annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby on April 10, 2021, in The Marianas.

The derby will start at 6am and will conclude at 5pm the same day, launching from Smiling Cove Marina.

Prizes will include $2,000 cash for 1st place, $1,500 for 2nd place, $100 for 3rd place, and consolation prizes for 4th and 5th places.

The registration fee is $100 per boat, including one captain and one angler, and $25 for each additional angler. Pre-registration will be held on April 9 from 4:30pm to 6pm at the Smiling Cove Marina weighing station. Derby officials from the SFA will also brief participants on the rules and regulations of the competition.

"The Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby is one of The Marianas' most anticipated annual fishing events for both local fisherman and those from Guam and other areas," said Marianas Visitors Authority managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. Sport fishing in The Marianas is a perfect opportunity to enjoy the beautiful waters of The Marianas, and the MVA is pleased to be an annual supporter of this fishing derby."

MVA

Errol T. Moises shows his winning catch in the 15th Annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby on March 30, 2019, in The Marianas. The 17th Annual Mahi-mahi Fishing Derby will be held on April 10, 2021.

Spectators are invited to see the day's catch as fishermen begin returning to Smiling Cove Marina at approximately 4pm on derby day.

Event organizers are reminding participants that no catch will be entered after the 5pm deadline. Awards will be distributed immediately after the derby at Smiling Cove Marina. Boats are encouraged to conduct a pre-boat safety inspection by calling the Department of Public Safety Boating Unit at 664-9000.

For more information about the derby, contact MVA Community Projects manager Martin Duenas at 664-2000/1 or mduenasmduenas@mymarianas.com. ***(PR)***

NMI

From Page 20

Women's Run 2021 in support of the International Women's Day (March 8), which started over a century ago as a global day celebrating the social, economic, cultural, and political achievements of women. The day also marks a call to action for accelerating women's equality and supports the World Athletics goals of Being Active by creating activities that support performance, culture and healthy lifestyle and the goal of Athletics for a Better World by increasing social inclusion.

"We are inviting all to #ChooseToChallenge by coming out during the Month of March, running a distance of their choice and helping to honor women the world over," NMSA general secretary Robin Sapong said.

NMA has partnered with Race Roster, an online registration site used by many federations in Oceania Athletics, to enhance its presence online and make it easier for CNMI residents to participate. Registration is open online at: https://raceroster.com/events/2021/45389/nmi-10km-womens-run. ***(PR)***

SOUTHERN

From Page 20

made one of her two goals in the 8th minute of the match.

TanHoldings proved to be a fine foe and fought back behind Sydney Hinds who found the back of the net in the 9th minute.

MP United, thirsty for the win, regained the lead with another goal from Lee in the 23rd minute.

In an effort to turn the tables in their favor, TanHoldings' Julie Ann Capayas made the final goal of the game in the 27th minute, ending the game in a draw.

DIVISION A
Shirley's FC 2, Kanoa FC 1

Shirley's added another win to their overall standings for the season behind Jerlyn Castillo and Jullianne Hall who contributed one goal apiece.

Castillo took the lead for Shirley's scoring the first goal in the 15th minute.

Kanoa's Kelsey McClellan brought the game to a tie in the 16th minute, but Hall broke the tie and took the lead back for Shirley's in the 23rd minute.

Southern United 9, TanHoldings 1

Southern United eased past TanHoldings by holding a strong lead from start to finish behind Jannah Casarino, Nathanette Camacho, and Summer Manahane each making two goals apiece. Kaithlyn Chavez, Pia Ngewakl, and Marinel Falalimpa each made one point to add to the team's winning score.

MASTERS DIVISION
Paire 1 4, TanHoldings 1

Paire 1, who holds the No. 1 spot in the Masters Division, held the lead from start to finish behind Lindsay Davis who made her two goals in the 9th and 13th minute of the match with help from Natalie Hill-Beyer who added one point in the 26th minute.

Matansa 3, Kanoa 0

Matansa's Bunruang Brasuell led the way to victory with her two goals with help from Wasana Gregory who added one point.

Brasuell made the first goal of the match in the 17th minute followed by a goal from Gregory in the 43rd minute. Brasuell landed one more goal before the end of the match in the 47th minute.

Lillard scores 50, Blazers rally past Pelicans, 125-124

PAGE 17

Saipan Tribune
Sports

17th Annual Mahi Mahi Fishing Derby on April 10

PAGE 18

Southern United breaks into win column

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Southern United Football Club earned its first win of the season in Division B of the 2021 Spring Dove Women's League held last Sunday at the NMI Soccer Training Center in Koblerville.

KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

Southern United Football Club gained their first win of the season in the Division B of the 2021 Spring Dove Women's League held at the NMI Soccer Training Center last Sunday in Koblerville.

Southern United nipped Kanoa Football Club, 3-2, during their matchup to gain its first win of the season.

Keisha Deleon Guerrero led the charge for Southern United by making the first goal in the 9th minute. She followed up with another goal in the 16th minute.

Kanoa bounced back in the 26th minute behind Ivana Claire Gozum who scored a goal followed by another from Mary Kay Alferos in the 30th minute to bring the game to a tie.

Southern United's Megan Elayda broke the tie in the 48th minute, solidifying the win for her team.

Shirley's FC remains undefeated in Division A, while Paire FC team 1 stays team to beat in the Masters Division.

DIVISION B
TanHoldings 2, MP United 2

MP United drew first blood in their matchup last Sunday behind Breanna Nicole Lee who

See SOUTHERN on Page 19

School leagues cancelled

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA
kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Public School System has cancelled all ongoing school leagues as a result of the recent surge of COVID-19 cases in the community.

According to Nick Gross, PSS athletic director, currently all PSS athletic program activities are cancelled until further notice due to PSS' closure of schools through March 27.

PSS resumed 100% remote learning effective Monday and will carry on for 14 days as a result of the recent surge of COVID-19 positive cases identified in the community.

One of the events that were canceled was the 2021 Middle School Grass Volleyball League that kicked off just two weeks ago.

"It is with a heavy heart that I inform [all] that the remaining volleyball events have been canceled until further notice due to the PSS closure. We will also have to cancel the planned double-elimination tournament scheduled for March 26-27," Gross said.

The league was set to enter its double-elimination tournament from March 26 to March 27.

Gross said he will do all he can to bring back the league once the situation clears up but for now, the safety of the students and staff are the priority.

"I will do all I can to salvage the remainder of the season, but the safety of the kids, officials, and our community are my current concerns," he said.

In related news, Saipan International School has also cancelled its Student Council Tennis Tournament that was supposed to kick off this Thursday.

Last Saturday, the Rollers Basketball Association also canceled its 2021 Spring Madness league until further notice as a result of the identified community cluster of cases.

ROSELYN MANROYO

The Public School System has cancelled all athletic programs, including the 2020-2021 Co-ed Middle School Grass volleyball tournament that just started two weeks ago.

NMI Women's Run moved to March 27

Northern Mariana Athletics has decided to reschedule the NMI Women's Run 2021 to March 27.

"We would like to thank all of the runners who have already signed up for the NMI Women's Run 2021. We realized that many of you are busy with the current situation or may have concerns. In order to assist you and make this first Women's Run as successful as possible, NMA has decided to postpone the event until March 27, 2021," NMA said in a press statement.

The NMI Women's Run will offer opportunities for runners to participate both virtually and face-to-face, and bring the 2021 Women's History Month to a close. The face-to-face run will take place on the official 10K race course, starting at American Memorial Park by the Hyatt Regency Saipan with a turnaround point across Ladera Building in Beach Road. This is a 10K race for women only and participants can enter both individual and team categories. In the team category, four women will complete the 10K distance and the Top 3 times will be added up to give a composite time.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Female runners head back to the Last Command Post during a 10K run race last month in Marpi. Northern Marianas Athletics is hosting the NMI Women's Run 2021 and has rescheduled the 10K event to March 27.

In the virtual event, participants can run distances of 5K or 10K. Men are also welcome to come out and support the important women in their lives in the virtual event as well. Participants can complete the distance of their choice wherever they like during the entire month of March, including on a treadmill. The virtual event also includes a team category.

NMA is hosting the NMI

See NMI on Page 19